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THOMAS WARTON

A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY

BY

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1916

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PREFACE

The purpose of the following study is to estimate the intrinsic and historical importance of Thomas Warton. To this end it discusses the relation of all his work—his poetry, his criticism, his history of English poetry, his various antiquarian works—to the literary movements of his day. This frequently underrated author was more than a small poet, worthy critic, and dabbler in literary antiquities; he was an important contributor to the literary reaction in the eighteenth century. Largely because of his enthusiastic study of the middle ages, he was able to supply in every department of literature which he entered an important quality previously lacking. To poetry he added a new theme and much picturesque imagery, and he furthered the return to nature and the sonnet revival. In criticism his study of the past produced the historical method and helped greatly to emancipate literary criticism from the tyranny of the rules. To literary history he contributed a fuller study of English poetry in its earlier periods than had previously been attempted, and he showed that the poetry of the neglected mediæval period was at least as important as classical literature in the development of modern English literature.

To the main facts concerning Warton's life and writings, as they are given by Sir Sidney Lee in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, it has not been possible to make many additions. I have, however, been able to make use of sixty-two unpublished and apparently hitherto unnoticed letters in the British Museum and in the Bodleian and the Harvard College Libraries, and a collection of miscellaneous notes in the Winchester College Library. I have also referred to the manuscripts at Trinity College and in the possession of the descendants of the Warton family, which the previous biographer mentions. The bibliography of the sources of the *History of English Poetry* has been compiled both as an evidence of Warton's industry and erudition and as an interesting list of the books on such a subject available to a scholar of that period. In preparing it, I have not depended upon conjecture, other bibliographies, or library catalogues, but have carefully compared hundreds of the references in the history with the originals to make sure of finding the books and editions actually used. I have previously discussed Warton's criticism of Spenser in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, March, 1915, and Warton's poetry in the *Seawance Review*,

April, 1915. I published twenty-six of the new letters with notes in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, January, 1915.

In the pursuance of this study I have, of course, laid myself under obligations to many other students of the eighteenth century and the romantic movement. In my investigations I have been courteously helped by the librarians of the various libraries in which I have worked. Special thanks are due Miss Catherine E. Lee for cordial permission to examine the Warton manuscripts in her possession; Mr. M. H. Green for every courtesy in his power to offer in the furtherance of my investigations at Trinity College, Oxford; Mr. Herbert Chitty for placing at my disposal the Warton material at Winchester College; Miss E. J. O'Meara for bringing to my attention a copy of a rare edition of Warton's poems in the Yale University Library; Mr. L. M. Buell for calling to my notice the Warton-Percy letters in the Harvard College Library; Miss Jennie Craig for valuable help in the University of Illinois Library; Mr. D. H. Bishop for information concerning Joseph Warton; and Professor H. S. V. Jones for helpful suggestions and criticism. Most of all, however, I am indebted to Professor S. P. Sherman, at whose suggestion this work was undertaken, and whose wise and genial counsel has directed its progress. Professor W. A. Oldfather has kindly assisted in seeing the work through the press.

C. R.

Urbana, Illinois.

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY EARLY LIFE OXFORD

Family tradition derived the Warton family from a very ancient and honourable one, the Wartons of Warton Hall, Lancashire, through a collateral branch which had migrated to Beverley Parks, Yorkshire, where the then head of the family, Michael Warton, was knighted by Charles I, during the Civil Wars.¹ With the defeat of the royalist cause the family estate was so impoverished by heavy fines that they were unable to maintain the rank of gentry, and Laurence Warton, second brother of Sir Michael, removed to Redness in the vicinity of Sheffield. His second son, Francis, who probably went into the church and migrated to the south of England, is very likely the same Francis Warton of Breamore, Hampshire, who was the great-grandfather of Thomas Warton,² the historian of English poetry. Certain it is that Thomas Warton's seal bore the Warton arms,³ 'Or, on a chevron azure, a martlet between two pheons of the first.' Nothing further is known of Francis Warton except that he destined his son Anthony for the

¹According to John Warton, the laureate's nephew, who, however, gave conflicting information to the biographers of his uncle and father. See Mant's *Poetical Works of Thomas Warton with . . . Memoirs*, etc., 2 vols. London 1802, vol. I, p. ix, and Wooll's *Biographical Memoirs of . . . Joseph Warton*, London 1806, p. 2 and note.

The Lancashire Wartons seem not to have considered the Wartons of Beverley to belong to their family. 'Edward B. Dawson, of Aldcliffe Hall, Lancaster, descended from a collateral branch of the Wartons of Warton Hall, Carnforth, in a letter to E. R. Wharton, dated Jan. 10, 1896, says that he never heard of the Wartons of Beverley being at Warton. His ancestors were living at Warton Hall in 1725, and for long before, as their records extend backwards at Warton for over 375 years (—1521).' Bodleian Library, MSS. Wharton, 14 f. 22b.

On the other hand Richard St. George's visitation of Yorkshire, 1612, derives the Wartons of Beverley from a Christopher, and a John, "of Warton." J. Foster: *Visitation of Yorkshire*, 1875, p. 386, quoted in MSS. Wharton, 14 f. 11.

²See Appendix A.

³I have seen several impressions of it upon Warton's letters, and the new paneling in the Chapel at Winchester College has a copy of it as Joseph Warton's among the arms of the masters of the college.

church, and sent him, in 1666, when he was a lad of sixteen to Magdalen College, where he was entered as a 'pleb.'⁴ Later he became a 'clerk,' took the usual degrees, received a number of church preferments, and settled in the living of Godalming, in Surrey.⁵ Of his three sons, the two eldest were deaf and dumb, and one of them, a painter of some promise, died young.⁶ The third, Thomas, we may presume had some slight defect of sight sufficient to give point and sting to Amhurst's sobriquet of 'squinting Tom of Maudlin,'⁷ but not serious enough to hinder his progress either at Oxford or in the church. It is perhaps to this unfortunate inheritance that his son's, Thomas Warton's, slight impediment of speech was due.⁸

Thomas Warton the elder seems to have been a man of some independence of thought, though of very moderate ability. At Oxford he was conspicuous and popular for his Jacobite sympathies, being the author of a satirical poem on George I, called *The Hanover Turnip*, and verses on the Chevalier's picture.⁹ The extant poetry written by this Thomas Warton does not show that he had any great claim to the poetry professorship on account of the excellence of his verse, and it was probably his political bent rather than his literary ability that led to his election to that office in 1718 and his re-election five years later in spite of considerable opposition. His incompetence as a professor and a sermon which he preached against the government were the subjects of sarcastic and vigorous exposure and attack in Amhurst's *Terra-Filius*,¹⁰ but his reputation seems not to have suffered seriously therefrom.

Although a friend of Pope, the elder Warton was not altogether of his poetical faith. He was an admiring reader and imitator of

⁴Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, Early Series, 1891. IV, p. 1577.

⁵This Anthony Warton was not the author of the *Refinement of Zion*, published in 1657, ascribed to him by Wooll.

⁶Mant, *Op. cit.* p. i.

⁷[Amhurst]: *Terra-Filius; or, The Secret History of the University of Oxford*, in *Several Essays*, etc. London 1726, p. 48.

⁸Johnson likened Warton's manner of speech to the gobble of a turkey-cock, and the editor of the Probationary Odes declared that when Warton was about to be ejected from the royal presence by a sturdy beef-eater, he was recognized in time to avert the catastrophe by a 'certain hasty spasmodic mumbling, together with two or three prompt quotations from Virgil.' (Mant, *op. cit.* p. cvi). Even Daniel Prince, the Oxford book-seller, who had no motive for ridicule, testified that his organs of speech were so defective that he was not readily understood except by those who were familiar with his manner of speaking. (Nichols: *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, etc. 9 vols. 1812-15. III, p. 702.)

⁹*Terra-Filius; or, etc.* p. 49.

¹⁰Nos. X, XV, XVI.

Spenser and Milton,¹¹ and wrote the first imitations of runic poetry, two poetical versions of Latin translations quoted by Sir William Temple from the song of Regnor Ladborg, a northern king.¹² These odes are much more poetical than the feeble Spenserian imitation, *Philander, an Imitation of Spenser, occasioned by the death of Mr. William Levinz, of M. C. College, Oxon, Nov. 1706*,¹³ which is significant only for its early date, though both attempts are important as showing one of the sources of the romantic tastes of his more gifted sons. The poems of Thomas Warton composed a small volume published by his sons¹⁴ in 1748 in order to pay the small debts left by their father, of whom both seem to have been extremely proud. The runic odes, which thus appeared a dozen years before Gray's¹⁵ and Percy's¹⁶ northern poetry, must have furnished them with some suggestion for expressing poetically the interest in northern mythology so keenly aroused by Mallet's *Introduction à l'Histoire de la Danemarque*.¹⁷

It is impossible to say when the elder Warton's poems were written, perhaps after he had retired from the poetry professorship—he had some years previously gone to reside regularly at his vicarage at Basingstoke—and had withdrawn still more from Oxford society; they were the parerga of a life busy with the successive vicarages of Framfield, Woking and Cobham, which he held in addition to his living at Basingstoke, and with the Basingstoke grammar school, of which he was master. His sons did not even know of the existence of his poems until they found them among his papers after his death and after both sons had given evidence that they had already come into their real poetical patrimony.

Of Elizabeth Richardson, the mother of the Wartons, it is impossible to discover more than that she was the second daughter of Joseph Richardson, rector of Dunsfold, Surrey, who was also a younger son of

¹¹Thomas Warton the younger relates an anecdote to show that his father was the means of calling Pope's attention to Milton's *Minor Poems*, with which he was wholly unfamiliar, and that he thus led to the sprinkling of phrases from Milton in the *Eloisa to Abelard*. See his edition of Milton's *Poems upon Several Occasions*, 2nd ed. London, 1791, preface p. x.

¹²Temple's *Works*, ed. 1720, I, p. 216.

¹³A manuscript copy of this poem, probably the original manuscript, dated at Mag. Coll. Oxon, Sept. 29, 1706, is in an uncatalogued manuscript in Winchester College Library.

¹⁴Joseph Warton's name alone appears on the title-page, but Thomas, who was yet an undergraduate at Trinity, was consulted. Wooll, *Op. cit.* pp. 214-215.

¹⁵See Gray's *Works*, ed. Gosse, I, p. 60, and Walpole's *Letters*, ed. Toynbee, V, p. 55 and VII, p. 175.

¹⁶See Phelps's *English Romantic Movement*, Boston 1893, p. 142.

¹⁷Published in 1755, and translated by Percy in 1770.

a Yorkshire family of some means and education, the Richardsons of North Bierley, several members of which attained some distinction in the church. Mrs. Warton died at Winchester in 1762.¹⁸

It was at the vicarage at Basingstoke, the ninth of January, 1728, the year that his father's occupancy of the poetry professorship terminated, that Thomas Warton the younger, the poet and Oxford don, the critic and historian of English poetry, was born¹⁹ in a home comfortable, but neither luxurious nor fashionable, where there were refinement and intellectual gifts above the average. His brother Joseph, the master of Winchester College, to whom he was singularly attached throughout his life, and his sister Jane were both several years older than Thomas.

As a child Thomas Warton showed many signs of precocity—a fondness for study, a passion for reading, and an early bent to poetry. He was no doubt greatly encouraged in these pursuits by his father, certainly a man of ready sympathy, who, without in any way losing the respect of his sons, made himself their close friend and confidant.²⁰ He had naturally assumed the task of their education, and Thomas, at least, had no other master until he went up to Oxford, a lad of sixteen. His education was, of course, largely classical, and the elder Warton was able to communicate to his sons not only a substantial Latin style, but a genuine enthusiasm for classical studies which neither of them ever lost. It is possible that Thomas was more fortunate than otherwise in remaining so long under his father's instruction; Joseph, writing to his father from Winchester School, expressed the fear that the Latin style of composition which was there permitted to be used would not meet with his father's approval.²¹

No doubt a very valuable part of Thomas Warton's early education consisted in browsing in his father's library, which must have been a fairly well-stocked one, and probably contained more curious old books than were usually included in the libraries of country clergymen. Spenser must have been read early and often to have gained so firm a hold upon Warton's affections, and probably other early poets, perhaps even a few romances. Certainly Milton was a favourite; perhaps the early edition of the *Poems on Several Occasions*,²² or Fenton's edition,²³

¹⁸Anderson's *British Poets*, London 1795, vol. XI, p. 1053.

¹⁹January the 9th, 1727-8, Thomas, the sounne of Mr. Thomas Warton, Vicar, by Elizabeth his wife was borne, and baptized the 25th of the same month by Mr. Hoyle, Curate.' *Basingstoke Parish Register*. Quoted from Baigent and Millard's *History of Basingstoke*, 1889, p. 649.

²⁰Wooll, *Op. cit.* p. 10.

²¹*Ibid.* p. 9.

²²1673. In *A Catalogue of books, (being the libraries of . . . Thomas Warton, . . . and others) to be sold by Thos. Payne*, London, 1801, this volume is listed with the note, 'MS. notes by T. W.'

²³1729. *Ibid.*

both full of manuscript notes²⁴ in Warton's crabbed hand, were part of the father's library which passed into the son's hands. Fenton's edition, at least, is known to have belonged to Warton very soon after he had gone to Oxford.²⁵ As an evidence of the strength of the boy's passion for reading it was related of him that he used to withdraw with his books from the family group at the fire-side, even in the excessively cold winter of 1739 and 1740—he was then but eleven years old—in order to devote himself uninterruptedly to his reading.²⁶

Warton's first poetical attempt was in the nature of a voluntary school exercise, a translation from Martial, *On Leander's swimming over the Hellespont to Hero*, which he sent in a letter to his sister. Fortunately this evidence of the precocity of a boy of nine was preserved, though it is probably no great misfortune that other early poetical attempts have been lost. The lines, not bad for a child, are in the prevailing stilted diction of the day,—

When bold Leander sought his distant Fair,
(Nor could the sea a braver burthen bear)
Thus to the swelling waves he spoke his woe,
Drown me on my return,—but spare me, as I go.²⁷

The letter in which it was sent bears evidence, too, of the love for music which was characteristic of Warton; 'It will be my utmost ambition,' wrote the boy, 'to make some verses, that you can set to your harpsichord.'

Warton's boyhood days seem not to have been entirely filled, however, with study. There is every reason to believe that his romantic interest in the past, his fondness for the scenes of stirring events and the varied life of earlier days was kindled at a very early age by familiarity with historic places, not only in the immediate vicinity of Basingstoke—the ruined Chapel of the Holy Ghost in the village itself, adjacent to the grammar school, the scanty ruins of Basing House a few miles away near the scene of a battle between the Saxons and the Danes, Odiham Castle, where King David of Scotland was imprisoned after the battle of Neville's Cross,—but also by excursions with his father and brother to more distant places of interest. It seems quite likely that Salisbury Plain and Stonehenge, whose mystery deeply interested Warton,²⁸ were visited, and it is certain that the brothers were taken by their father to see Windsor Castle. Of this visit it was

²⁴These notes were first incorporated in the *Observations on the Faerie Queen*, and later amplified into an edition of the minor poems.

²⁵Mant, *Op. cit.*, p. xxviii.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. xi.

²⁷Letter to Jane Warton, November 7, 1737. *Ibid.*, p. xii.

²⁸Stonehenge was the subject of a sonnet published in the collected edition of Warton's poems in 1777.

related that while the father and the older brother were examining every detail with eager and voluble attention, the younger observed what he saw with so quiet a regard that his father misconstrued his silence as lack of interest and remarked to Joseph, 'Thomas goes on, and takes no notice of any thing he has seen.' Joseph, however, came later to realize how deeply impressed with everything he saw the younger boy had been, and remarked, 'I believe my brother was more struck with what he saw, and took more notice of every object, than either of us.'²⁹ The effect of this visit and similar experiences in his early youth probably made a profounder impression than even Joseph realized; to them was partly due, no doubt, Thomas's love of Gothic architecture and old ruins. In a reflection upon Milton he probably described his own youthful experience; 'Impressions made in earliest youth are ever afterwards most sensibly felt. Milton was probably first affected with, and often indulged the pensive pleasure which the awful solemnity of a Gothic church conveys to the mind, . . . while he was a school-boy at St. Paul's'.³⁰

In March, 1744, when Thomas had reached the age of sixteen, he was sent to Oxford,³¹ the city of 'dreaming spires and drouing dons,' where he spent the remainder and by far the greater part of his life. At the same time Joseph had just taken his first degree and entered holy orders, becoming his father's curate. It is evident from the father's letters at this time that the expense of maintaining his sons at the university was a considerable drain upon the slender resources of the country vicar, who was, however, eager that his sons should have every opportunity within his means to develop their talents and put them in the way of securing honourable preferment in the church. It must have been then a great relief that Thomas was elected one of the twelve scholars of Trinity College in the following year, especially since his father died soon after, leaving a few debts and no resources except his poems. But Joseph hit upon the plan of publishing the latter by subscription, depending upon the large circle of his father's acquaintance to ensure their sale, and wrote to his brother, 'Do not doubt of being able to get some money this winter; if ever I have a groat, you may depend upon having twopence.'³²

At Oxford Thomas Warton found a place at once congenial to his æsthetic and poetical tastes and an atmosphere conducive to the classical and antiquarian studies of which he was already fond. With habits of study already formed and with an eager thirst for knowledge

²⁹Mant, *Op. cit.*, p. xxix.

³⁰*Observations on the Fabric Queen*, ed. 1807, II, p. 140.

³¹Foster: *Alumni Oxonienses*, 1715-1886. 4 vols. Oxford, 1891. IV, p. 1505.

³²Oct. 29, 1746. Wooll, *Op. cit.*, p. 215.

he was at most only momentarily or rarely distracted from his studies by the universal tendency to idleness and dissipation which prevailed at Oxford throughout the eighteenth century. Warton himself had exactly that sort of 'quick sensibility and ingenuous disposition,' that vivid sense of the reality of the past, which, he said, was able to evoke and create 'the inspiring deity,' the 'GENIUS *of the place*,' at the reflection that he was 'placed under those venerable walls, where a HOOKER and a HAMMOND, a BACON and a NEWTON, once pursued the same course of science, and from whence they soared to the most elevated heights of literary fame.' He was able to feel 'that incitement which Tully, according to his own testimony, experienced at Athens, when he contemplated the porticoes where Socrates sat, and the laurel-groves where Plato disputed.'³³ Warton found in this emotional stimulus a substitute for the intellectual vigour that was unquestionably lacking at Oxford during the eighteenth century. Nothing more reveals the man than the nature of his reaction to the life of the University.

Testimony as to the intellectual stagnation at Oxford virtually throughout the whole eighteenth century is almost unanimous. The torpor into which the Church of England had sunk early in the century was shared by the University. The old spell of tradition and reverence for church authority was losing its potency, but without as yet being supplanted by any very vigorous and general spirit of reform. With the theological apathy that had fallen upon the universities was joined the curse of formalism and obsolete methods in education. The life of the university was expended too largely in political factions, in Jacobite sympathies, or in petty disputes over fellowships and preferments. The professors seem to have ceased to demand regular attendance at lectures which they seldom delivered, and the interests of the fellows were distracted between their fellowships and their benefices.

West wrote to Gray from Christ Church as from a 'strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves doctors and masters of arts; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown.'³⁴ Even more emphatically Gibbon lamented the fourteen months he had spent at Magdalen College as the most idle and unprofitable of his whole life,³⁵ and testified that he was 'never summoned to attend even the ceremony of a lecture; and, excepting one voluntary visit to his rooms, during the eight months of his

³³*Idler*, no. 33, by Thomas Warton. *Johnson's Works*, Lynam ed. 1825. II, p. 484.

³⁴Letter to Gray, November 14, 1735.

³⁵*Memoirs of my Life and Writings, Miscellaneous Works*. 5 vols. London, 1814, I, p. 47.

titular office, the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other."³⁶ The company of the fellows he found no more stimulating. 'From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience;' and instead of the 'questions of literature' which he expected them to discuss, 'their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal: their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth.'³⁷

For clever satirical descriptions of the abuse of academic privilege which was almost universal at Oxford we are indebted to Warton himself, who was, however, not averse to profiting by the leisure which the universal neglect of college exercises gave him for his own pursuits, and who doubtless enjoyed many an undignified frolic with his fellows. He has drawn two spirited pictures of the usual college fellow, for which only too many of his colleagues might have sat. The first, in the *Progress of Discontent*, recounts the history of a collegian from the time—

When now mature in classic knowledge,
The joyful youth is sent to college,

and his father,—

At Oxford bred—in Anna's reign,

bespeaks a scholarship:—

'Sir, I'm a Glo'stershire divine,
And this my eldest son of nine;
My wife's ambition and my own
Was that this child should wear a gown.'

.
Our pupil's hopes, tho' twice defeated,
Are with a scholarship completed:
A scholarship but half maintains,
And college-rules are heavy chains:
In garret dark he smokes and puns,
A prey to discipline and duns;
And now, intent on new designs,
Sighs for a fellowship—and fines.

That prize attained at length, he covets a benefice, and marries, only, at last, to long for the joys of his Oxford days again—

'When calm around the common room
I puff'd my daily pipe's perfume!
Rode for a stomach, and inspected,
At annual bottlings, corks selected:
And din'd untax'd, untroubled, under
The portrait of our pious Founder!'

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 58.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 53.

The other, the very amusing *Journal of a Senior Fellow, or Genuine Idler*, contributed to Johnson's *Idler*,³⁸ was undoubtedly drawn from the life and portrays the trivial employments of a majority of college fellows, and their absolute waste of academic leisure.

Monday, Nine o'Clock. Turned off my bed-maker for waking me at eight. Weather rainy. Consulted my weather-glass. No hopes of a ride before dinner.

Ditto, Ten. After breakfast, transcribed half a sermon from Dr. *Hickman*. *N. B.* Never to transcribe any more from *Calamy*; Mrs. *Pilcocks*, at my curacy, having one volume of that author lying in her parlour window.

Ditto, Eleven. Went down into my cellar. *Mem.* My *Mountain* will be fit to drink in a month's time. *N. B.* To remove the five-year-old port into the new bin on the left hand.

Ditto, Twelve. Mended a pen. Looked at my weather-glass again. Quick-silver very low. Shaved. Barber's hand shakes.

Ditto, One. Dined alone in my room on a soal. *N. B.* The shrimp-sauce not so good as Mr. *H.* of *Peterhouse* and I used to eat in *London* last winter, at the *Mitre* in *Fleet-street*. Sat down to a pint of *Madeira*. Mr. *H.* surprised me over it. We finished two bottles of port together, and were very cheerful. *Mem.* To dine with Mr. *H.* at *Peterhouse* next *Wednesday*. One of the dishes a leg of pork and peas, by my desire.

Ditto, Six. Newspaper in the common room.

Ditto, Seven. Returned to my room. Made a tiff of warm punch, and to bed before nine; did not fall asleep till ten, a young fellow-commoner being very noisy over my head.

Tuesday, Nine. Rose squeamish. A fine morning. Weather-glass very high.

Ditto, Ten. Ordered my horse, and rode to the five-mile stone on the *New-market* road. Appetite gets better. A pack of hounds in full cry crossed the road, and startled my horse.

Ditto, Twelve. Dressed. Found a letter on my table to be in *London* the 19th inst. Bespoke a new wig.

Ditto, One. At dinner in the hall. Too much water in the soup. Dr. *Dry* always orders the beef to be salted too much for me.

Ditto, Two. In the common-room. Dr. *Dry* gave us an instance of a gentleman who kept the gout out of his stomach by drinking old *Madeira*. Conversation chiefly on the expeditions. Company broke up at four. Dr. *Dry* and myself played at back-gammon for a brace of snipes. Won.

Ditto, Five. At the coffee-house. Met Mr. *H.* there. Could not get a sight of the *Monitor*.

Ditto, Seven. Returned home, and stirred my fire. Went to the common-room, and supped on the snipes with Dr. *Dry*.

Ditto, Eight. Began the evening in the common-room. Dr. *Dry* told several stories. Were very merry. Our new fellow, that studies physics, very talkative toward twelve. Pretends he will bring the youngest Miss ——— to drink tea with me soon. Impertinent blockhead! etc.³⁹

³⁸December 2, 1758. No. 33.

³⁹Chalmers: *The British Essayists*; etc. London 1808, vol. XXXIII, p. 112.

The undergraduates' indifference to everything but pleasure, the inevitable result of the self-indulgence of their superiors, came in for its share of ridicule in the *Companion to the Guide, and Guide to the Companion*,⁴⁰ a satire on Oxford guide-books and antiquarian studies as well as a humorous exposure of university abuses. Here Warton professed to describe a number of residence halls previously over-looked, 'in other words Inns, or Tippling Houses; or, as our colleges are at present, *Places of Entertainment*,' the 'Libraries founded in our *Coffee-Houses*, for the benefit of such of the Academies as have neglected, or lost, their Latin and Greek,' in which the Magazines, Reviews, Novels, Occasional Poems, and Political Pamphlets were supplied. And, 'as there are here Books suited to every Taste, so there are Liquors adapted to every species of reading,' for Politics, coffee, for Divinity, Port, and so on. Then there were a number of schools not commonly included in the guide-books: among them 'three spacious and superb Edifices, situated to the southward of the High-Street, 100 feet long, by 30 in breadth, vulgarly called *Tennis Courts*, where *Exercise* is regularly performed both morning and afternoon. Add to these, certain Schools familiarly denominated *Billiard Tables*, where the *Laws of Motion* are exemplified, and which may be considered as a necessary Supplement to our Courses of Experimental Philosophy. Nor must we omit the many *Nine-pin* and *Skittle-Alleys*, open and dry, for the instruction of Scholars in Geometrical Knowledge, and particularly, for proving the *centripetal* principle.' Among public edifices he solemnly noted the stocks, the town-pump and 'PENNYLESS BENCH a Place properly dedicated to the MUSES, [where] History and Tradition, report, that many eminent Poets have been *Benched*,'⁴¹ enumerating among them Phillips and the author of the *Panegyric on Oxford Ale*.

Although Oxford was perhaps no longer a power in the intellectual world, it was still one of the few places in England where there were any considerable libraries or facilities for study, and there was always there a little group of devoted scholars and serious men who used the abundant leisure afforded by the laxity of college discipline for individual research and study. A few such names redeemed the dishonour of Oxford during the eighteenth century. There have always been at Oxford a few scholars who were genuinely devoted to the classics. There were others whose interests centered in literary and historical antiquities, but who, because of the general contempt for such subjects and their own inability either to command respect for their work or to divert their interest to more immediately useful channels, fell under a certain obloquy as 'mere Antiquarians.' But however small were the

⁴⁰1760?

⁴¹Quotations from the second edition, London (1762?).

results of their laborious studies, they kept alive and transmitted to their successors in more favourable days an ardent interest in scholarship. Hickes actually made the study of Anglo-Saxon somewhat the rage among this class of students at Oxford at the beginning of the century, and his influence was perpetuated in the founding of the Rawlinson professorship by a member of his College (St. John's) about the middle of the century, an endowment which became effectual at its close when Anglo-Saxon scholarship was coming into its own. Trinity College, too, had its antiquarian tradition, best represented by John Aubrey, who contributed his manuscript *Minutes of Lives* to Anthony à Wood's *Antiquities of Oxford*; Thomas Coxeter, an industrious collector of old English plays, who was still living when Thomas Warton went up to Trinity and from whom he must have gained what was more valuable than notes for his *History of English Poetry*, access to his collection of plays; and Francis Wise, the archeologist and under keeper of the Bodleian, at whose home at Ellsfield Warton was a frequent and welcome guest, and who helped him with his *Life of Bathurst*. In this connection Robert Lowth, bishop of London, poetry professor when Warton went to Oxford and one of the most distinguished Oxford men of the eighteenth century, cannot be overlooked. Warton gave him some slight assistance with his life of Wykeham,⁴² and perhaps received from him the suggestion for his lives of the founder and a president of his college, Sir Thomas Pope and Ralph Bathurst.

Such was the state of Oxford when Warton matriculated in 1744; such it practically remained during the forty-seven years he lived there. And no one was more keenly alive than he to all its possibilities of pleasure and profit. Although most of his life was passed within the boundaries of college walls, of the 'High,' the 'Broad,' and the 'Corn,' of Cherwell and Isis and the adjacent parks and water-walks, he was master of every inch of that domain and was equally at home in his own common-room and 'Captain Jolly's,' among his fellow dons and the watermen along the river. He found at Oxford many other charms besides a favourable place to study, with ample leisure, and in an atmosphere permeated with the spirit of centuries of learning. It was to him the source of keen æsthetic pleasure. With appreciative eyes he viewed the Thames and Cherwell with their 'willow-fringed banks,' the charming water-walks bordered with fine old trees whose protruding roots and mossy trunks afforded many a delightful place to read, while the gently-rolling meadows beyond invited to morning rambles when the fields were purpling under the rising sun and the birds were beginning their songs.⁴³ These he may well have preferred to the more arti-

⁴²Letter from Lowth to Warton, Oct. 20, 1757. Wooll, Op. cit., pp. 249-252.

⁴³Ode, *Morning. The Author confined to College.*

ficial beauties of his own college gardens, then in their prime of eighteenth century topiary formality, with their 'walls all round cover'd with Green Yew in Pannelwork' enclosing a 'wilderness extremely delightful with variety of mazes, in which 'tis easy for a man to lose himself.' It is pretty unlikely that Warton was often tempted to sit down and study on the benches placed 'here and there in this Labyrinth;' he, at least, preferred the 'sedgy banks' of Cherwell to the 'neat Fountain with Artificial Flowers on the Surface of the Water.'⁴⁴ The real glory of the garden, then as now, must have been the beautiful avenue of lime trees to the north of the labyrinth, which had been planted thirty years before Warton came to Trinity, and whose arches and knarled boughs probably even then resembled the wood-timbered roof of a mediæval hall.

The fine old Gothic buildings of the University delighted even more. No one, perhaps, has viewed them with more enthusiastic appreciation than Thomas Warton. In an age that despised the Gothic his admiration for it grew steadily, and his taste was no doubt stimulated by the fine old gateway of Magdalen College, on which he was especially fond of gazing.⁴⁵ His *Triumph of Isis* contains a tribute to the beauties of Oxford,—

Ye fretted pinnacles, ye fanes sublime,
 Ye towers that wear the mossy vest of time;
 Ye massy piles of old munificence,
 At once the pride of learning and defence;
 Ye cloisters pale, that lengthening to the sight,
 To contemplation, step by step, invite;
 Ye high-arch'd walks, where oft the whispers clear
 Of harps unseen have swept the poet's ear;
 Ye temples dim, where quiet duty pays
 Her holy hymns of ever-echoing praise;
 Lo! your lov'd Isis, from the bordering vale,
 With all a mother's fondness bids you hail!

Especially during his first years at Oxford Warton probably did not devote himself exclusively to scholarly pursuits, but tasted the robuster pleasures and petty trials of the lighter side of Oxford life, contributing his share to an afternoon's pleasure at Wolvercote, entering with zest into games of skittles, excursions on the river by wherry, or cross-country gallops, and finishing the day's pleasures with a 'careless round in High-street' with calls at 'Jolly's for the casual draught.'⁴⁶ This aspect of his college career is reflected in his early humorous

⁴⁴J. Pointer's *Oxford Guide*, 1749, quoted by H. E. D. Blakiston, *Trinity College*, London, 1898, p. 201.

⁴⁵Mant, *Op. cit.*, p. c, quoting the *Biographical Dictionary*.

⁴⁶Warton's *Ode to a Grizzle Wig*.

academic poems with a lively realism that betrays actual experience of the joys and sorrows they describe.

My sober evening let the tankard bless,
With toast embrown'd, and fragrant nutmeg fraught,
While the rich draught with oft-repeated whiffs
Tobacco mild improves. Divine repast!
Where no crude surfeit, or intemperate joys
Of lawless Bacchus reign; but o'er my soul
A calm Lethean creeps; in drowsy trance
Each thought subsides, and sweet oblivion wraps
My peaceful brain, as if the leaden rod
Of magic Morpheus o'er mine eyes had shed
Its opiate influence. What tho' sore ills
Oppress, dire want of chill-dispelling coals
Or cheerful candle (save the make-weight's gleam
Haply remaining) heart-rejoicing ALE
Cheers the sad scene, and every want supplies.⁴⁷

Lines surely

' with honest love
Of ALE divine inspir'd, and love of song!

On the other hand the petty annoyances are no less realistically represented,—the vacant afternoons—

When tatter'd stockings ask my mending hand
Not unexperienc'd,

and 'the tedious toil Slides unregarded' comforted by draughts of 'all-pow'rful ALE;' the inevitable days of reckoning after careless joys when

. . . generous Captain JOLLY ticks no more,⁴⁸
Nor SHEPPARD, barbarous matron, longer gives
The wonted trust.⁴⁹

and

Th' unpitying Bursar's cross-affixing hand
Blasts all my joys, and stops my glad career,⁴⁹

and the invasion of his Eden by irate tradesmen,—the 'plaintive voice Of Laundress shrill,' the 'Barber spruce,' the 'Taylor with obsequious bow,' and the Groom 'with defying front And stern demeanour.'

Warton's poetical gift at times combined with his genial spirits to enliven somewhat the tedium of college life. Among the poetasters of the Bachelor's Common Room he started an amusing organization of the bachelors, which provided for the annual election, 'on Tuesday immediately after Mid-Lent Sunday,' of a 'Lady Patroness' from among the

⁴⁷*Panegyric on Oxford Ale.*

⁴⁸The Oxford Newsman's Verses, for the year 1767.

⁴⁹*Panegyric on Oxford Ale.*

Oxford 'Toasts' and a 'Poet Laureat' to sing her charms for the amusement of the other bachelors while they consumed a bottle of wine 'from their publick Stock,' and diverted themselves at the expense of their Laureate, who read his 'Verses before the Court' wearing 'a Chaplet of Laurel composed by the Common-Room Man after the manner of the Ancients.'⁵⁰ Warton himself served in the capacity of laureate for the first two years of the club's existence, but his verses to Miss Jenny Cotes and Miss Molly Wilmot have never been thought worthy of being transferred to any edition of his poems from the red-morocco-bound quarto in which they were carefully copied by the Common-Room man.⁵¹ Warton seems to have been the life of the club, and after he deserted the Bachelors' for the Fellows' Common Room, the club languished; its records became intermittent and finally ceased altogether.⁵²

In this atmosphere of mingled gaiety and work, in this environment of obvious pleasure and obscure study, Warton spent an active but uneventful life. Immediately upon taking his first degree he entered holy orders and became a tutor. Shortly after he had proceeded Master of Arts, he succeeded to a fellowship, and he remained a tutor and fellow of Trinity all his life. In this way he escaped the struggle for a livelihood which darkened the early years of some of his contemporaries. Warton knew nothing of the hard life of Grub Street nor the bitter disappointments against which his friend Dr. Johnson had contended. His academic and clerical preferments ensured him a comfortable, even a luxurious, living, congenial surroundings, libraries, and probably the most convenient facilities for literary work to be found anywhere in England, and a considerable amount of leisure to devote to his favourite pursuits. Warton seems never to have regarded himself as a professional man of letters. His first love, his first interest, was Oxford; his first loyalty, his first duty, was to her. And if he was

⁵⁰Statutes Ordered and Agreed upon by the Members of the Batchellors' Common Room. This book, in which the minutes of the club were kept, was deposited in Trinity College Library in November, 1820, and it was there that, through the kindness of Mr. Green, the present librarian, I examined the curious old book.

⁵¹They were printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. LXVI, p. 236.

In one of Warton's notebooks in Trinity College Library at Oxford is a bit of verse of a similar sort, called 'Extempore on a Lady with fine Eyes & bad Voice', as follows:

'Oxonia's Sons fair Arnold view
At once with Love and wonder.
She bears Jove's Lightning in her Eyes,
But in her Voice his Thunder.

Oxon. Sept. 17, 1752.'

⁵²In 1764.

somewhat remiss in his lectures, he had every encouragement to be so; and he more than once suffered his own work to languish while he devoted himself to his pupils.

It was very natural that Warton should be in a certain sense indolent. Without the spur of necessity to keep him steadily at one piece of work until it was finished, without great ambition for academic or church preferment, without the incentive of conspicuous examples of important scholarship, with abundant poetical taste, but without much creative poetical genius, with great abilities and an enthusiastic interest in a wide range of subjects, it was easy for him to drift from one subject to another, to have his energies frequently diverted into new channels. He passed with perfect ease and unabated enthusiasm from poetry to criticism, from antiquarian to classical research, from literary history to the editing of his favourite poet. And his work has all the merits of a labour of love: enthusiasm, appreciative criticism, sympathetic interpretation and thoroughness in purpose, if not always in accomplishment; it is distinguished in every field.

CHAPTER II

EARLY POETRY, PUBLISHED BEFORE 1777

Naturally enough Warton first attempted to express his genius in poetry, and the bulk though not the best of his poems were written while he was yet a young man. Then, because the age in which he lived was unfavourable to poetry, especially the new kind that he was writing, and because, as Christopher North said, 'the gods had made him poetical, but not a poet,'¹ he turned later to criticism and history where he won more immediate as well as more enduring fame. He did not, however, so completely abandon poetry as not to produce some pieces which, when compared with the work of his contemporaries, have real intrinsic value and take an important place in the development of poetry in his century. Moreover, his early verse, though largely imitative, imitates new models, the poet's favourites, Spenser and Milton, more than the pseudo-classical models, and shows a real originality in its introduction of the Gothic or mediæval subjects in which the poet was always deeply interested, in its genuine interest in nature, and in its attempts of the sonnet form. Besides this, his verse illustrates more completely than that of any one of his contemporaries the whole change that was taking place in English poetry; it includes practically every tendency of the new movement: the repudiation of the pseudo-classical models, the Spenserian and Miltonic revivals, the return to nature, the cult of solitude, the melancholy of the 'grave-yard school,' the interest in the supernatural, and the Gothic revival. Although Warton lacked the lyrical sweetness and poetic insight of his friend Collins—whose qualities he could at least appreciate—and the poetic fire and inspiration of Gray—to whom he paid the tribute of a sonnet—these are the poets with whom one feels bound to compare him. If he had less poetical genius than either of them, he had at least a greater variety of interests, and he made distinguished contributions in the direction of his principal interests.

¹*An Hour's Talk about Poetry*, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, XXX, p. 483.

Warton's first published poem,² printed without his name in his brother's thin quarto of *Odes on Various Subjects* in 1746, was, like his earlier school-boy exercise, a classical imitation. The year before it appeared, when the poet was but seventeen, he had written his first long poem, *The Pleasures of Melancholy*, and he published it anonymously in a quarto pamphlet in 1747. The poem shows how devoted a student of Milton the young poet was, the tone and diction being decidedly Miltonic although the title and the form were obviously directly suggested by Akenside's much less romantic *Pleasures of Imagination*. The poem follows the general plan of *Il Penseroso*, being a description of the various pleasures which the man devoted to melancholy contemplation may enjoy, and it is full of personifications of abstractions and Miltonic epithets and diction. A few typical passages will illustrate both Warton's command of blank verse and the influence of Milton:—the invocation,—

Mother of musings, Contemplation sage,
Whose grotto stands upon the topmost rock
Of Teneriff;

and such direct allusions as,—

. the dazzling spells
Of wily Comus cheat th' unweeting eye
With blear illusion, and persuade to drink
That charmed cup, which Reason's mintage fair
Unmoulds, and stamps the monster on the man;

and,—

The taper'd choir, at the late hour of pray'r,
Oft let me tread, while to th' according voice
The many-sounding organ peals on high,
The clear slow-dittied chaunt, or varied hymn,
Till all my soul is bath'd in ecstasies,
And lapp'd in Paradise.³

The whole poem is saturated too with the melancholy of the graveyard school of poets, and passages can be selected which seem to have been directly inspired by various of their poems. The young poet gives every evidence of having tried his hand in the style of each of them; but he combined the results into a whole with some characteristic addi-

²*To a Fountain. Imitated from Horace, Ode XIII, Book III, p. 32 in Warton's Odes.*

A small collection of poems, *Five Pastoral Eclogues*, which was published anonymously in 1745 and subsequently in Pearch's *Continuation of Dodsley's Collection*, has been attributed to Warton, but probably erroneously. At least he never acknowledged them, and his sister assured Bishop Mant that he positively disclaimed them. Mant, *Op. cit.*, p. xiv.

³*Cf. Il Penseroso, lines 161-6.*

tions of his own. Among the lines that show Warton's debt to the early poets of the melancholy school the following are obviously imitations of Parnell and Young,—

But when the world
Is clad in Midnight's raven-colour'd robe,
'Mid hollow charnel let me watch the flame
Of taper dim, shedding a livid glare
O'er the wan heaps; while airy voices talk
Along the glimm'ring walls; or ghostly shape
At distance seen, invites with beck'ning hand
My lonesome steps, thro' the far-winding vaults.
Nor undelightful is the solemn noon
Of night, when haply wakeful from my couch
I start: lo, all is motionless around!
Roars not the rushing wind; the sons of men
And every beast in mute oblivion lie;
All nature's hush'd in silence and in sleep.
O then how fearful is it to reflect,
That thro' the still globe's awful solitude,
No being wakes but me!

The description of 'fall'n Persepolis' was surely written with Dyer's *Ruins of Rome* fresh in memory,—

Here columns heap'd on prostrate columns, torn
From their firm base, increase the mould'ring mass.
Far as the sight can pierce, appear the spoils
Of sunk magnificence! a blended scene
Of moles, fanes, arches, domes and palaces,
Where, with his brother Horror, Ruin sits.

The description of the morning rain-storm, no doubt suggested by Thomson and not without echoes of Spenser, bears at the same time unmistakable evidence of Warton's close observation of rural scenes and his ability to portray them in simple but clear outlines,—

Yet not ungrateful is the morn's approach,
When dropping wet she comes, and clad in clouds,
While thro' the damp air scowls the louring south,
Blackening the landscape's face, that grove and hill
In formless vapours undistinguish'd swim;
Th' afflicted songsters of the sadden'd groves
Hail not the sullen gloom; the waving elms
That, hoar thro' time, and rang'd in thick array,
Enclose with stately row some rural hall,
Are mute, nor echo with the clamors hoarse
Of rooks rejoicing on their airy boughs;
While to the shed the dripping poultry crowd,
A mournful train: secure the village-hind
Hangs o'er the crackling blaze, nor tempts the storm;
Fix'd in th' unfinish'd furrow rests the plough.

This choice of models was not accidental even from the first; it was part of a consistent and deliberate reaction against the prevailing models and a rejection of them. His preference for Spenser rather than Pope Warton stated expressly in this first long poem and defended on the very 'romantic' ground that livelier imagination and warmer passion are aroused by the artless magic of the *Faerie Queene* than by the artificial brilliance of the *Rape of the Lock*,—

Thro' POPE'S soft song tho' all the Graces breathe,
And happiest art adorn his Attic page;
Yet does my mind with sweeter transport glow,
As at the root of mossy trunk reclin'd,
In magic SPENSER'S wildly warbled song
I see deserted Una wander wide
Thro' wasteful solitudes, and lurid heaths,
Weary, forlorn; than when the fated fair
Upon the bosom bright of silver Thames
Launches in all the lustre of brocade,
Amid the splendors of the laughing Sun.
The gay description palls upon the sense,
And coldly strikes the mind with feeble bliss.⁴

Warton's relation to the melancholy group of poets who drew their inspiration largely from *Il Penseroso* is, moreover, not that of a mere imitator. He made positive contributions to that style of poetry by contriving to preserve a more objective tone in his own melancholy and by introducing the Gothic note⁵ that later frequently became dominant in his own verse and constituted his distinctive contribution to poetry. Of even greater importance is the fact that he may fairly be credited with having influenced pretty directly the greatest poem of the elegiac school, Gray's *Elegy in a Country Church-yard*. The following passage gives the setting for Gray's poem too clearly for the similarity to be dismissed as altogether accidental,—

Beneath yon ruin'd abbey's moss-grown piles
Oft let me sit, at twilight hour of eve,
Where thro' some western window the pale moon
Pours her long-levell'd rule of streaming light;
While sullen sacred silence reigns around,

⁴This brief but happy comparison of Pope's verse with Spenser's expresses the same idea that was given fuller discussion nearly ten years later by the poet's brother in his revolutionary *Essay on Pope*, 1756.

⁵The poem also gives evidence of Warton's interest in native mythology: 'Contemplation' is represented as having been found by a Druid

Far in a hollow glade of Mona's woods,
and carried to the 'close shelter of his oaken bow'r' where she

. lov'd to lie

Oft deeply list'ning to the rapid roar
Of wood-hung Meinai, stream of Druids old.

Save the lone schreech-owl's note, who builds his bow'r
 Amid the mould'ring caverns dark and damp,
 Or the calm breeze, that rustles in the leaves
 Of flaunting ivy, that with mantle green
 Invests some wasted tow'r.

The additional fact that Gray took up again in the winter of 1749—two years after *The Pleasures of Melancholy* was published—the poem he had begun several years earlier⁶ increases the likelihood that Warton's poem prompted and influenced the completion of his own:—

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
 The moeping owl does to the moon complain
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Warton's devotion to his Alma Mater inspired the *Triumph of Isis*, in 1749, the first poem to attract the attention of the academic world. The year before, William Mason, in *Isis: an Elegy*, had glanced at the Jacobite leanings of Oxford as they had given rise to a foolish drunken out-break which had been carried to the King's bench and had reflected dishonour upon the heads of some of the colleges. Warton, encouraged by Dr. Huddesford, the president of Trinity, hastened to the defense of his university in a poem that at least surpassed Mason's. The youthful poet received a substantial compliment from Dr. King, whom he had especially commended, and who left five guineas with Daniel Princee, the bookseller, to be given to the author. The *Triumph of Isis* is not one of Warton's best poems. It is largely pseudo-classical in its use of the heroic couplet, its artificial diction,—such as 'vernal bloom,' 'oliv'd portal,' 'pearly grot,' 'floating pile,' 'dalliance with the tuneful Nine,'—and in its stereotyped classical allusions. It is full of Miltonic personifications of abstractions and places mingled with the deities and heroes of classical myth and history; we meet with Freedom and Gratulation, Cam and Isis, Muse and Naiad, Tully, Cato and Eurys. But there is quite as much mediæval colouring. Warton's characteristic love of the past appears in one of the finest passages in the poem in which his admiration for Gothic architecture is only second to his love of Oxford.⁷

Following the appearance of these poems Warton was asked to contribute to the *Student, or, the Oxford, and Cambridge Monthly Miscellany*, and brought out four poems of earlier composition which were

⁶See Gray's *Works*, ed. Gosse, I, p. 72.

⁷Quoted p. 20.

printed over various signatures.⁸ *One, Morning. The Author confined to College*, in six line stanzas, shows some influence of Milton and a personal enjoyment of natural scenes, and one is a paraphrase of Job XXXIX in heavy couplets, unlike any other of Warton's verse. Two of the poems were humorous academic verse, experiments in satire and burlesque in the taste of the Augustans. The earliest of them, the *Progress of Discontent*,⁹ written in 1746, was considered by the poet's brother, who may not have been an impartial critic, the best imitation of Swift that had ever appeared.¹⁰ It is a mild satire upon the career of many a young man who, with discontented indolence rather than ambition, sought advancement through the university and church, and the story is told in vigorous Hudibrastic measure with considerable relish and spirit. The *Panegyric on Oxford Ale*¹¹ is probably the best of his humorous academic pieces. It is a burlesque of Milton's epic style after the manner of Phillips's *Splendid Shilling*. The blank verse is well managed, and the mock dignified humour well kept up throughout the poem. The models are unmistakable; there are direct allusions to both, and the poem concludes with comparing the unhappiness of the poet whose supply of ale is cut off with that of Adam shut out from Paradise,—a grief he professed to share in common with his master, the author of the *Splendid Shilling*,—

Thus ADAM, exil'd from the beauteous scenes
Of Eden, griev'd, no more in fragrant bow'r
On fruits divine to feast, fresh shade and vale
No more to visit, or vine-mantled grot;

Thus too the matchless bard, whose lay resounds
The SPLENDID SHILLING'S praise, in nightly gloom
Of lonesome garret, pin'd for cheerful ALE;
Whose steps in verse Miltonic I pursue,
Mean follower: like him with honest love
Of ALE divine inspir'd, and love of song.
But long may bounteous Heav'n with watchful care
Avert his hapless lot! Enough for me

⁸*A Panegyrick on Ale*, signed T. W. x. y. z., p. 65-8; *Morning. An Ode*, signed J. J. Trin. Coll. Cambridge, p. 234-5; *The Progress of Discontent*, signed T. W. x. y. z., p. 235-8; *Job, Chapter XXXIX*, signed Θ, p. 278-9. Oxford, 1750, vol. I.

⁹The poem was founded on a Latin exercise which was commended by Dr. Huddesford, and at his request thus paraphrased in English. Mant, Op. cit., II, p. 192.

¹⁰J. Warton's edition of Pope, 9 vols. London, 1797, II, p. 302.

¹¹Quoted above p. 21.

That burning with congenial flame I dar'd
His guiding steps at distance to pursue,
And sing his favorite theme in kindred strains.

In the same year Warton made two other modest offerings, both of slight importance. *Newmarket, a Satire*, published anonymously, was a somewhat heavy Popeian satire in closed couplets with balance, antithesis, and not infrequent epigrammatic turns of thought. Another pamphlet contained an academic poem, an *Ode for Music*, written for the anniversary in commemoration of the benefactors to the university, and performed at the Sheldonian Theatre, July 2, 1751.

In all these attempts the poet was evidently trying to find both himself and his public. That he felt the need of winning an audience for poetry which was deliberately different from the prevailing fashion is shown by the fact that much of it was published anonymously and that in his next publication, to which he did not affix his name,—*The Union: or Select Scots and English Poems*, containing some of his brother's odes, Collins's *Ode to Evening*, and Gray's *Elegy*, a few ancient Scottish poems, and minor poems by some of his contemporaries,—he asked for the verdict of the public upon two new poems of his own which he included without owning them.¹² In his preface, as in the table of contents, he ascribed them to 'a late member of the University of Aberdeen, whose modesty would not permit us to print his name,' and he further drew them and their author to public attention by adding, 'from these ingenious essays, the public may be enabled to form some judgment beforehand of a poem of a nobler and more important nature which he is now preparing.' Since it was Warton's life-long practice to announce in his various publications work which he had then in hand or intended soon to publish, there is no reason for supposing that he did not at the time actually intend to write a serious and extended poem of some kind, with which the favour of the public did not encourage him to proceed.

Of the two poems thus modestly proffered, the *Pastoral in the Manner of Spenser* was patently inspired by the poet whose work Warton was then studying carefully both as poet and critic, and the *Ode on the Approach of Summer* was obviously Miltonic. The former is a double imitation, a paraphrase of the 20th *Idyllium* of Theocritus in the manner of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* with pseudo-Spenserian diction. But like other eighteenth century imitators of Spenser—of whom, it will be remembered, his father was perhaps the first—Warton had not enough knowledge of Spenser's language to escape such solecisms as 'did deemen', nor could his admiration save him.

Some passages of the *Ode* are little more than rearrangements of

¹²His verses *Inscribed On a Beautiful Grotto near the Water* were also included, but without his name.

Milton's thought and even diction, although it is noticeable that Warton was somewhat truer to the spirit of his model than many of Milton's imitators; his melancholy is not so obtrusive as theirs, and he retains much of Milton's genuine classicism, with which he was in close sympathy. All of these points are illustrated by the following passage, selected almost at random,—

Or bear me to yon antique wood,
Dim temple of sage Solitude!
There within a nook most dark,
Where none my musing mood may mark,
Let me in many a whisper'd rite
The Genius old of Greece invite,
With that fair wreath my brows to bind,
Which for his chosen imps he twin'd,
Well nurtur'd in Pierian lore,
On clear Illissus' laureate shore.

Warton was, however, more interested in the mysteries of native superstition than in Grecian rites. Stirred by reading Spenser and old romances, he sighed for 'more romantic scenes,' for the

. . . fairy bank, or magic lawn,
By Spenser's lavish pencil drawn:
Or bow'r in Vallombrosa's shade,
By legendary pens pourtray'd.

He longed to visit

The rugged vaults, and riven tow'rs
Of that proud castle's painted bow'rs,
Whence HARDYKNUTE, a baron bold,
In Scotland's martial days of old,
Descended from the stately feast,
Begirt with many a warrior guest,
To quell the pride of Norway's king,
With quiv'ring lance and twanging string.

And when he continued,—

Might I that holy legend find,
By fairies spelt in mystic rhymes,
To teach enquiring later times,
What open force, or secret guile,
Dash'd into dust the solemn pile,

he had passed from the influence of Milton and Spenser into his own best-loved poetical province, the glories of the Gothic past.

This most representative of Warton's earliest poems contains also what appears to be his poetical program. It has been said before that the preface to the collection in which these poems appeared had hinted at a longer poem by the same author soon to be published should these

meet with favour; the *Ode* suggests what the nature of that 'nobler and more important' poem might have been. The prophecy of his most striking contribution to the new movement in poetry, the poetical embodiment of the past, begun even in his early work, appears in a passage near the close of the poem where the poet, ensconced in his ideal retreat, promises to dedicate his days to poetry, poetry which shall celebrate England's glorious past,—

Nor let me fail, meantime, to raise
The solemn song to Britain's praise:
To spurn the shepherd's simple reeds,
And paint heroic ancient deeds:
To chant fam'd ARTHUR'S magic tale,
And EDWARD, stern in sable mail;
Or wand'ring BRUTUS' lawless doom,
Or brave BONDUCA, scourge of Rome.

These are the themes we find constantly recurring through Warton's poetry, finding their best expression later in the odes *On the Grave of King Arthur* and *The Crusade*.

That Warton was not simply an imitative poet was steadily proved by each new poem, and by none more strikingly than by two sonnets published in 1755 in Dodsley's *Collection*.¹³ He was a constant experimenter with forms as well as subjects of poetry. It may have been—pretty certainly was—his admiration for Milton again that interested him in the sonnet, but the subjects of his sonnets are not only so un-Miltonic but so original in their use of the form to express personal emotion in the presence of natural scenes as to show him a real and important innovator. Warton was not, however, the first eighteenth century poet to write sonnets; Mason, Stillingfleet, and Edwards had each written a few, so that the whole credit for its revival cannot be claimed for any one of them.¹⁴ But certainly Warton's greater impor-

¹³Vol. IV, p. 221-2.

¹⁴Mason has a sonnet written before 1748, according to his own somewhat loose statement, but not published until 1797. See Mason's *Works*, ed. 1811, I, p. 121.

Edwards wrote fifty. (See Phelps's *Romantic Movement*, p. 45-6). Thirteen were published in volume II of Dodsley's *Collection*, 1748 (2nd ed.) in which Warton's first two sonnets were published, vol. IV, (ed. 1755). See my note in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, XXX, p. 232.

Some of Stillingfleet's sonnets were certainly written before 1750. Phelps, as above.

Gray's *Sonnet on the Death of West* has an even earlier date, 1742, but it was not published until after his death.

See also E. P. Morton's list of fifty sonnets before 1750 in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, XX, p. 97-8, *The English Sonnet*, (1658-1750), which does not include Mason's first sonnet.

tance as a man of letters and the superior merit and originality of theme of his sonnets make his influence greater in the revival of the sonnet than that of any of his predecessors.

The *Sonnet Written at Winslade in Hampshire* 'about 1750' is the better of the two. It is not free from the influence of Miltonic diction—though not the diction of the sonnets; it is distinctly personal and reflective in tone, and further it indicates Warton's feeling that in their poetical inspiration the native charms of the village were peculiarly adapted to his genius. It shows that his interest in natural scenes as the source of poetic emotion was as conscious and deliberate in his early verse as his interest in the past for the same purpose,—

Her fairest landscapes whence my Muse has drawn,

Too free with servile courtly phrase to fawn,

Too weak to try the buskin's stately strain.

The *Sonnet on Bathing*¹⁵ is likewise Miltonic in diction, but it wholly lacks the personal note that distinguishes the other. Both are written in the Miltonic form, with better rhymes than some of his later sonnets.

The important long poem promised in the preface to the *Union* never appeared. The poet was not only not sufficiently encouraged by the reception of his poems in that collection, but so far discouraged as to publish no more serious poems until after his fame as the critic of Spenser and historian of English poetry made them sure of a favourable hearing, perhaps, too, until his critical work had somewhat won the taste of his age to the new sort of poetry. He made, however, one further venture in the humorous vein which had always a certain vogue. In 1764 he was the unconfessed editor of a miscellany of humorous verse called *The Oxford Sausage; or, Select Poetical Pieces: Written by the Most Celebrated Wits of the University of Oxford*. His own earlier academic verse with several new pieces of inferior merit were included in this miscellany with a great many similar poems by his contemporaries. The preface, in mock-serious style, explained the purpose and praised the novelty of such a collection and poked slyly at the growing fondness for poring over manuscript collections: 'That nothing might escape us, we have even examined the indefatigable Dr. Rawlinson's voluminous collection of manuscripts presented to the Bodleian Library, but, we must acknowledge, without success; as not one poignant ingredient was to be found in all that immense heap of rare and invaluable originals.'¹⁶ Of the two poems little need be said. The not very amusing dialogue between the *Phaeton* and the *One-Horse Chair* is, apparently,

¹⁵This sonnet was the only one of Warton's included by Coleridge in his privately-printed pamphlet containing twenty-eight 'Sonnets from various Authors', to be bound up with those of Bowles.

¹⁶Preface, p. vi, ed. 1821, Oxford.

as a reviewer in the *Monthly Review*¹⁷ observed, an imitation of Smart's fable of the *Bag-Wig and Tobacco-Pipe*. More clever is the little *Ode to a Grizzle Wig* in which Warton, while comparing the relative merits of 'bob' and 'grizzle', frequently burlesqued with relish the manner of Milton's shorter poems. These poems and the *Oxford News-man's Verses* were evidently dashed off with more enjoyment of the fun than poetry, and their chief interest lies in the fact that they show the poet in his most robust and genial mood.

The most interesting of the new Warton poems, however, is not by Thomas Warton, but by his brother Joseph, the *Epistle from Thomas Hearne, Antiquary, to the Author of the Companion to the Oxford Guide*,¹⁸ which on the authority of Mant¹⁹ has been pretty generally accepted as written by Thomas Warton.²⁰ But surely there are many who are loath to believe that Warton directed this clever squib at himself, when the author of the *Companion* and the editor of the *Sausage* were so generally guessed to be the same, and who are glad to find among Joseph Warton's letters a letter to Thomas in which he calls it his own.²¹ The poet addressed Warton as—

Friend of the moss-grown spire and crumbling arch,
and concluded with a curse upon his antiquarian studies—

. may curses every search attend
That seems inviting! May'st thou pore in vain
For dubious door-ways! May revengeful moths
Thy ledgers eat. May chronologic spouts
Retain no cypher legible! May crypts
Lurk undiscern'd! Nor may'st thou spell the names
Of saints in storied windows! Nor the dates
Of bells discover! Nor the genuine site
Of Abbots' pantries! And may Godstowe veil,
Deep from thy eyes profane, her Gothic charms!

Warton's apparent abandonment of poetry at the very moment when he seems to have been passing from poetry largely imitative to poetry with considerable originality and intrinsic value demands some explanation. The reasons for Warton's partial desertion of poetry and turn to critical and historical studies are in part the same. It is generally recognized that the eighteenth century was conspicuously an age of prose, of reason, of skepticism, of didacticism; its characteristic poetry was either prosaic or merely brilliant and correct; and its attitude

¹⁷XCI, p. 275.

¹⁸*A Companion to the Guide, and a Guide to the Companion*, London (1760).

¹⁹Who included it in his edition of Warton's poems, II, p. 189.

²⁰It is quoted among Warton's antiquarian pieces by Professor Beers in *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 201-2.

²¹Letter of July 5, 1769, Wooll, Op. cit., p. 348.

toward imagination, enthusiasm, romance, decidedly hostile. It was not the age to encourage such a poet as Thomas Warton with his enthusiastic love of the older neglected poets and his fondness for romance, nor to be moved by descriptions of the glories of the past. The standards and ideals of the school of Pope were not yet overthrown,—Warton himself did not immediately escape from their influence in his own poetry,—and there probably were few who read his verse with sympathetic appreciation. And Warton's poetical genius was not sufficiently robust to weather the storms of unfavourable criticism. Later in his life his sensitiveness to ridicule of his poetry—he could endure with composure the most virulent abuse of his other work—cost him the friendship of Dr. Johnson; at this period criticism simply repressed his poetic fervor. It is characteristic of his natural modesty as well as of his appreciation of the general lack of sympathy with his Gothic muse that, except in very early letters to his brother,²² although he wrote freely of his plans, his progress with all his other work of all sorts, there is no mention of his poetry, even in his letters to Price, to whom he wrote intimately.²³

As far as we can judge from the poetry which Warton wrote, excellent as some of it is, his was not a great poetical genius. Poetical taste, feeling and enthusiasm he had in abundance, but there seems to have been a lack of the creative spark. How great a poet he might have become in more favourable circumstances it would be futile to enquire; we can only concern ourselves with the reasons why he was not, and with watching the development of his genius in other fields.

Unlike Gray,²⁴ who, under similar circumstances and with a greater poetic gift than Warton, was all but silenced by his uncongenial environment and his inability to express himself, Warton was able to turn the force of his genius into other channels. In Gray both the poet and the scholar were repressed; his powers were apparently inhibited by forces beyond his control, an involuntary but unconquerable inertia. Warton with greater energy, robust health, and more vigorous hold upon reality, could accomplish what Gray, because of his sensitive reticence, continual ill-health and dreamy impracticality, could not.

With less practical force, and probably less profound scholarship, Warton turned his gifts to better account and made for himself a much larger place in the history of English criticism and scholarship. Gray

²²Letters of October 29, 1746 and June 7, 1753. Wooll, *Op. cit.*, pp. 214, 217.

²³In two letters to Malone there is very brief mention of poetry. Jul. 29, 1787. 'You flatter me much in your opinion of my last Ode.' Jan. 3, 1789. 'I appear in the Papers, not only as an Esquire, but as the author of a New Year's Ode which I never wrote.' British Museum Additional MSS. No. 30375.

²⁴See Arnold's *Essay*.

had not the versatility and adaptability which enabled Warton to find another outlet for his genius when that of poetry proved difficult. He was equally a scholar with Warton, but his scholarship was barren. Both as a poet and as a scholar his fervor was repressed and his genius rendered inarticulate. In the case of Warton there was no such tragedy of unexpressed genius. Discouraged as a poet, he turned his poetical enthusiasm, his love for the Gothic, for romance, into criticism and history; the poet all but disappeared in the scholar. And with the works which were the results of his scholarship before us, we cannot regret the loss of that we never knew, when it would mean the sacrifice of much the value of which we partly recognize.

CHAPTER III

CRITICISM: THE OBSERVATIONS ON THE FAERIE QUEENE OF SPENSER 1754-1762

Warton did not immediately find himself in another field. He undertook a number of different kinds of work at this time, and either partly or wholly abandoned each. British antiquities claimed his attention, and this interest produced the *Description of . . . Winchester*;¹ the study of mediæval antiquity resulted in a project merely—that of collaborating with his brother in a history of the revival of learning,²—but it bore fruit later; as a result of his interest in the classics he planned translations of Homer and Apollonius Rhodius; the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* was the commencement of a larger plan of writing observations on the best of Spenser's work.

The hand of the poet is as evident as that of the scholar in the *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser*.³ Warton's love for Spenser and his poetical enthusiasm were here first turned to criticism, but of a sort unknown before. And the secret of the new quality is to be found in this poetical enthusiasm of the writer which enabled him to study the poem from its own point of view, not hampered by artificial, pseudo-classical standards of which the poet had known nothing, but with a sympathetic appreciation of his literary models, the spirit of his age, his heritage of romance and chivalry, and the whole many-coloured life of the middle ages. These things Warton was able to see and to reveal not with the eighteenth century prejudice against, and ignorance of, the Gothic, but with the understanding and long familiarity of the real lover of Spenser.

¹*A Description of the City, College and Cathedral of Winchester. . . . The whole illustrated with . . . particulars, collected from a manuscript of A. Wood.* London, n. d. [1750] 12°.

²*Select Epistles of Angelus Politianus, Desiderius Erasmus, Hugo Grotius, and others, with notes* of such importance as to constitute a history of the revival of learning. Perhaps this was abandoned because of the plan of their mutual friend, Collins, to publish a *History of the Restoration of Learning under Leo the Tenth*. See Wooll, op. cit., p. 29 and *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 361, note x.

³London, 1754. Second edition, corrected and enlarged, 2 vols. 1762. References are to the third edition, 2 vols., 1807.

The result of Warton's combined poetical enthusiasm and scholarly study of Spenser was that he produced in the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* the first important piece of modern historical criticism in the field of English literature. By the variety of its new tenets and the definitiveness of its revolt against the pseudo-classical criticism by rule, it marks the beginning of a new school. Out of the turmoil of the quarrel between the 'ancients' and the 'moderns' the pseudo-classical compromise had emerged. The 'moderns', by admitting and apologizing for a degree of barbarity and uncouthness in even their greatest poets, had established their right to a secure and reputable place in the assembly of immortals, although on the very questionable ground of conformity with the ancients and by submitting to be judged by rules which had not determined their development. It was thus by comparisons with the ancients that Dryden had found Spenser's verse harmonious but his design imperfect;⁴ it was in the light of the classical rules for epic poetry that Addison had praised *Paradise Lost*,⁵ and that Steele had wished an 'Encomium of Spenser'⁶ also.

Impossible as was the task of reconciling literature partly romantic and modern with classical and ancient standards, the critics of a rationalistic age did not hesitate to accomplish it; common sense was the pseudo-classical handmaiden that justified the rules, methodized nature, standardized critical taste, and restrained the 'Enthusiastick Spirit' and the *je ne sais quoi* of the school of taste. The task was a hard one, and the pseudo-classical position dangerous and ultimately untenable. A more extended study of literary history—innoeuously begun by Rymer⁷—and an enlightened freedom from prejudice would show at the same time the inadequacy of the rules and the possibility of arriving at sounder critical standards.

These are the two principal gifts that Thomas Warton had with which he revolutionized criticism: intelligent independence to throw off the bondage of the rules, and broad knowledge to supply material for juster criteria. When he said, 'It is absurd to think of judging either Ariosto or Spenser by precepts which they did not attend to,'⁸ he not merely asserted their right to be judged by Gothic or 'romantic', as opposed to pseudo-classical, standards, but sounded the death-knell of criticism by rule, and the bugle-note of the modern school. When, in the same critical work, and even more impressively in two later ones,⁹ he brought

⁴*Essay on Satire*.

⁵*Spectator*, Jan. to May, 1712.

⁶*Spectator*, No. 540.

⁷*A Short View of Tragedy*, 1693. See Chapter V.

⁸*Observations*, I, p. 21.

⁹*Ilist. Eng. Poetry*, 1774, 1778, 1781. *Milton's Poems upon Several Occasions*, 1785.

to bear upon the subject in hand a rich store of ideas and illustrations drawn from many literatures—Latin, Greek, Italian, French, and English in its obscure as well as its more familiar eras,—he rendered an even more important service on the side of constructive criticism.

Warton's *Observations* is connected not only with the history of critical theory in the eighteenth century but also with what is called the Spenserian revival. It was partly the culmination of one of several related movements tending toward the restoration of the older English classics. While Chaucer was slowly winning a small circle of appreciators; Shakespeare, from ignorantly apologetic admiration and garbled staging, through serious study and intelligent comprehension, was coming into his own; and Milton was attaining a vogue that left its mark on the new poetry; the Spenserian revival was simultaneously preparing to exert an even greater influence. Although Spenser was never without a select circle of readers, that circle was small and coldly critical during the pseudo-classical period when his principal charm was that which his moral afforded readers who held that the purpose of poetry was to instruct. Most readers assented to Jonson's dictum that Spenser 'writ no language' without attending to the caveat that followed, 'Yet I would have him read for his matter.' The difficulties of his language, the tiresomeness of his stanza,¹⁰ the unclassical imperfection of his design, and the extravagance of the adventures too often obscured even the beauty of his moral. Therefore it was after a pretty general neglect of his poetry that the eighteenth century saw a species of Spenserian imitation arise which showed to what low ebb the study of Spenser had sunk. The first of these imitators either ignorantly fancied that any arrangement of from six to ten iambic pentameter lines capped with an Alexandrine, with distinctly Popeian cadence and a sprinkling of 'I ween', 'I weet' and 'whilom' by way of antiquated diction, could pass for Spenserian verse,¹¹ or followed the letter of the stanza closely enough, but failed to

¹⁰Hughes, *Remarks on the Fairy Queen* prefixed to Spenser's *Works*, 2nd. ed. 1750. I, p. lxxvii.

¹¹Prior: *Ode to the Queen, written in imitation of Spenser's Style*. 1706. Preface. Whitehead: *Vision of Solomon*, 1739, and two *Odes to the Hon. Charles Townsend*. Boyse: *The Olives an Heroic Ode, etc. in the stanza of Spenser* (ababedcdee) 1736-7. *Vision of Patience: an Allegorical Poem; Psalm XLII: In imitation of the Style of Spenser* (ababcc, no Alexandrine) 1740. Blacklock: *Hymn to Divine Love*, and *Philantheus* (ababbcc) 1746. T. Warton, Sr.: *Philander* (ababcc) 1748. Lloyd: *Progress of Envy* (ababedcdd) 1751. Smith: *Thales* (ababbcc) 1751. See W. L. Phelps: *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*. Boston, 1902. Ch. on Spenserian Revival, and Appendix I, for a more complete list.

take their model seriously, and misapplied it to vulgar burlesque, social and political satire, and mere moralizing.¹² Their ignorance of the poet whom they professed to imitate is marked. Often they knew him only through Prior's imitations; usually their attempts at antiquated diction betray them.¹³ Occasionally, as in the case of Shenstone, a study of Spenser followed imitation of him, and led to a new attitude, changes in the imitation, and finally, apparently, to an admiration that he neither understood nor cared to admit.¹⁴

Of course by far the best of the Spenserian imitators was James Thomson, whose work was the first to rise above the merely imitative and to have an independent value as creative poetry. Although his *Adver-*

¹²Pope: *The Alley*, date unknown, an exercise in versification, and ill-natured burlesque. Croxall: *Two Original Cantos of the Fairy Queen*, 1713 and 1714. Akenside: *The Virtuoso*, 1737, mild satire. G. West: *Abuse of Travelling*, 1739, satire. Cambridge: *Archimage*, 1742-50, a clever parody. Shenstone: *The Schoolmistress*, 1742, satirical. Pitt: *The Jordan*, 1747, vulgar burlesque. Ridley: *Psyche*, 1747, moral allegory. Mendez: *The Seasons*, 1751, *Squire of Dames*, 1748-58. Thomson: *Castle of Indolence*, 1748. See also Phelps, as above.

¹³Such slips as 'nor ceasen he from study' and 'he would oft ypine' in Akenside's *Virtuoso* and even Thomson's note. 'The letter y is frequently placed in the beginning of a word by Spenser to lengthen it a syllable; and *en* at the end of a word for the same reason.' Glossary to the *Castle of Indolence*.

¹⁴I cannot agree with Professor Phelps that, 'as people persisted in admiring *The Schoolmistress* for its own sake, he finally consented to agree with them, and in later editions omitted the commentary explaining that the whole thing was done in jest'. *The Beginning of the English Romantic Movement*, p. 66. On the contrary, it seems pretty clear that although Shenstone had probably not come to any very profound appreciation of the older poet, his admiration for him became more and more serious, but that he lacked the courage of his convictions, and conformed outwardly with a public opinion wholly ignorant of Spenser. Two later letters of Shenstone's indicate pretty clearly that it was he, and not 'the people', whose taste for Spenser had developed. In November, 1745, he wrote to Graves (to whom he had written of his early contempt) that he had read Spenser once again and 'added full as much more to my *Schoolmistress*, in regard to number of lines; something in point of matter (or manner rather), which does not displease me. I would be glad if Mr. — were, upon your request, to give his opinion of particulars,' etc. Evidently the judgment was unfavorable, for he wrote the next year, 'I thank you for your perusal of that trivial poem. If I were going to print it, I should give way to your remarks *implicitly*, and would not dare to do otherwise. But so long as I keep it in manuscript, you will pardon my silly prejudices, if I chuse to read and shew it with the addition of most of my new stanzas. I own, I have a fondness for several, imagining them to be *more* in Spenser's way, yet more independent on the antique phrase, than any part of the poem; and, on that account, I cannot yet prevail on myself to banish *them* entirely; but were I to print, I should (with *some* reluctance) give way to your sentiments.' Shenstone's *Works*. 1777. III, pp. 105-6.

tisement and a few burlesque touches throughout the poem are evidence of the influence of the *Schoolmistress* and of the prevailing attitude toward Spenser, Thomson went further than mere external imitation and reproduced something of the melody and atmosphere of the *Fairy Queen*. Thus poetical enthusiasm began the Spenserian revival; it remained for a great critical enthusiasm to vindicate the source of this inspiration and to establish it on the firm basis of scholarly study and intelligent appreciation.

The first attempt at anything like an extended criticism of the *Fairy Queen* was in the two essays *On Allegorical Poetry* and *Remarks on the Fairy Queen* which prefaced John Hughes's edition of Spenser's works in 1715, the first eighteenth century edition.¹⁵ Steele, in the 540th *Spectator*, three years before, had desired an 'Encomium of Spenser', 'that charming author', like Addison's Milton papers, but nothing further than his own meagre hints was forthcoming. And Hughes's attitude, like that of the imitators, was wholly apologetic.

Hughes seems almost to have caught a glimpse of the promised land when he refused to examine the *Fairy Queen* by the classical rules for epic poetry, saying: 'As it is plain the Author never design'd it by those Rules, I think it ought rather to be consider'd as a Poem of a particular kind, describing in a Series of Allegorical Adventures or Episodes the most noted Virtues and Vices: to compare it therefore with the Models of Antiquity, wou'd be like drawing a Parallel between the *Roman* and the *Gothick* Architecture.'¹⁶ At first sight one is inclined to think this very near to Warton's revolutionary dictum, but the bungling way in which he spoiled the effect of this striking statement by preparing in advance a set of pseudo-classical and misfit standards to apply as he exposed the unsuitability of the old, merely by the substitution of allegory for epic, shows that he was a true pseudo-classicist after all. He could not, nor would, throw off his allegiance to the ancients. If the *Fairy Queen* could not be considered as an epic, it could be judged as an allegory, the rules of which, though not described by the ancients, were easily determinable. And in attempting to set forth the rules for allegorical poetry, he tried to conform to the spirit of the classical critics as he understood it, and to illustrate his subject by examples from classical poets. Nevertheless he felt some reluctance in introducing a subject which was 'something out of the way, and not expressly treated

¹⁵And the first attempt at an annotated edition. *Spenser's Works, to which is prefix'd . . . an Essay on Allegorical Poetry* by Mr. Hughes. 6 vols. London, 1715. Second edition, 1750. There is a second preface, *Remarks on the Fairy Queen*. References are to the second edition.

¹⁶*Remarks on the Fairy Queen*. I, p. xliii.

upon by those who have laid down Rules for the Art of Poetry.¹⁷ Hughes's ideas of what should constitute successful allegory were therefore embodied in his *Essay on Allegorical Poetry*, by the uncertain light of which the critic hoped 'not only to discover many Beauties in the *Fairy Queen*, but likewise to excuse some of its Irregularities.'¹⁸

Hughes did not, however, yield to the spell of 'magic Spenser's wildly-warbled song.' While he admitted that his fable gave 'the greatest Scope to that Range of Fancy which was so remarkably his Talent'¹⁹ and that his plan, though not well chosen, was at least well executed and adapted to his talent, he apologized for and excused both fable and plan on the score of the Italian models which he followed, and the remnants of the 'old Gothic Chivalry' which yet survived. The only praise he could give the poem was wholly pseudo-classical,—for the moral and didactic bent which the poet had contrived to give the allegory,²⁰ and for some fine passages where the author 'rises above himself' and imitates the ancients.²¹ In spite of his statement that the *Fairy Queen* was not to be examined by the strict rules of epic poetry, he could not free himself from that bondage, and the most of his essay is taken up with a discussion of the poem in the light of the rules. Moreover Hughes was but ill-equipped for his task: he failed even to realize that a great field of literary history must be thoroughly explored before the task of elucidating Spenser could be intelligently undertaken, and that genuine enthusiasm for the poet could alone arouse much interest in him. These are the reasons why nearly forty years elapsed before the edition was reprinted, and why it failed to give a tremendous impetus to the Spenserian revival. Yet, notwithstanding its defects, it is extremely important that Hughes should have undertaken at all the editing of so neglected a poet.²² It is a straw that points the direction of the wind.

The next attempt at Spenserian criticism was a small volume of *Remarks on Spenser's Poems and on Milton's Paradise Regained*, published anonymously in 1734, and soon recognized as the work of Dr. Jortin, a classical scholar of some repute. This is practically valueless as a piece of criticism. But Jortin was at least partly conscious of his

¹⁷*Essay on Allegorical Poetry*, I, p. xxi.

¹⁸*Remarks on the Fairy Queen*, I, p. xlii.

¹⁹*Ibid.* I, p. xliv.

²⁰*Ibid.* I, p. xl. *Essay on Allegorical Poetry*.

²¹*Ibid.* I, p. l.

²²The neglect of Spenser is best shown by the few editions of either the *Fairy Queen* or the complete works which had appeared since the first three books of the former were published in 1590. *Faerie Queene*, 1st. ed. 4to. 1590-6; 2nd, 1596; 3rd, fol., 1609; Birch ed. 3 vols. 4to. 1751. *Poetical Works*, 1st fol. ed. 1611; 2nd, 1617-18; 3rd, 1679. Hughes, 1st ed. 1715, 2nd, 1750.

failure and of a reason for it, though he was more anxious to have the exact text determined by a 'collation of Editions, and by comparing the Author with himself' than to furnish an interpretive criticism; and he acknowledged himself unwilling to bestow the necessary time and application for the work,²³—a gratifying acknowledgement of the fact that no valuable work could be done in this field without special preparation for it.

And when Thomas Warton was able to bring this special preparation for the first time to the study of the *Fairy Queen*, he produced a revolution in criticism. Freed from the tyranny of the rules by the perception of their limitations, he substituted untried avenues of approach and juster standards of criticism, and revealed beauties which could never have been discovered with the old restrictions. That he should be without trace of pseudo-classicism is something we cannot expect; but that his general critical method and principles are ultimately irreconcilable with even the most generous interpretation of that term is a conclusion one cannot escape after a careful study of the *Observations on the Fairy Queen*.

Briefly, the causes of Warton's superiority over all previous critics of Spenser, the reasons why he became through this piece of critical writing the founder of a new kind of criticism, are four. First, he recognized the inadequacy of the classical rules, as interpreted by Boileau and other modern commentators, as standards for judging modern literature, and declared his independence of them and his intention of following new methods based upon the belief that the author's purpose is at least as important a subject for critical study as the critic's theories and that imagination is as important a factor in creative literature as reason. Second, he introduced the modern historical method of criticism by recognizing that no work of art could be independently judged, isolated from the conditions under which it was produced, without reference to the influences which determined its character, and without considering its relation to other literatures. In taking this broad view of his subject, Warton was, of course, recognizing the necessity for a comparative study of literature. In the third place, and as a consequence of this independence and this greater breadth of view, Warton understood more fully than his contemporaries the true relation between classical and modern literature, understood that the English writers of the boasted Augustan age, in renouncing their heritage from the middle ages, had deprived themselves of the qualities which alone could have redeemed their desiccated pseudo-classicism. And last, Warton made a place in criticism for the reader's spontaneous delight and enthusiasm.

²³Jortin's conclusion quoted in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, II, p. 53. H. E. Cory says nothing of Jortin's *Remarks* in his monograph, *The Critics of Edmund Spenser*, Univ. of California Pub. in Mod. Phil. II; 2, pp. 71-182.

Few critics of the eighteenth century recognized any difference between their own rules and practice and those of the ancients, or saw the need for modern standards for judging modern poems. Just here comes the important and irreparable break between Warton and his contemporaries. While Hughes and the rest attempted to justify Spenser by pointing out conformities to the rules²⁴ where they existed or might be fancied, and condemned his practice when they failed to find any, Warton was at some pains to show that Hughes failed and that such critics must fail because their critical method was wrong.²⁵ He pointed out that the *Fairy Queen* cannot be judged by rule, that the 'plan and conduct' of Spenser's poem 'is highly exceptionable', 'is confused and irregular', and has 'no general unity';²⁶ it fails completely when examined by the rules. To Warton this clearly showed the existence of another standard of criticism—not the Aristotelian, but the poet's: Spenser had not tried to write like Homer, but like Ariosto; his standard was romantic, not classical; and he was to be judged by what he tried to do.

Warton's declaration of independence of pseudo-classical criticism was a conscious revolt; yet it was one to which he made some effort to win the assent of his contemporaries by conceding that Spenser's frequent extravagances²⁷ did violate the rules approved by an age that took pride in its critical taste. His desire to engage their interest, however, neither succeeded in that purpose nor persuaded him that those rules were properly applied to poems written in ignorance of them. There is no uncertainty, no compromise with pseudo-classical criticism in the flat defiance, 'it is absurd to think of judging either Ariosto or Spenser by precepts which they did not attend to.'²⁸

Having thus condemned the accepted standards as inadequate for a just criticism of the *Fairy Queen*, Warton's next purpose was to find those by which it could be properly judged: not the rules of which the poet was ignorant, but the literature with which he was familiar. He recognized quite clearly a distinction between a classical and a romantic poet, and accounted for it by a difference of circumstances. Warton's even then extensive knowledge of the neglected periods of earlier English literature gave him a power that most of his contemporaries lacked and

²⁴Dryden had done the same thing in the *Dedication to the Translation of Juvenal* by pointing out how the character of Prince Arthur 'shines throughout the whole poem,' and Warton took issue squarely with him on the point and denied any such unity. See *Observations*, I, p. 10-11. Addison used the same method in his papers on *Paradise Lost*. Beni was probably the originator of this sort of misapplied criticism in his comparison of Tasso with Homer and Virgil. I, p. 3.

²⁵*Ibid.* I, p. 11 ff.

²⁶*Ibid.* I, p. 17.

²⁷*Ibid.* I, p. 18.

²⁸*Ibid.* I, p. 21.

enabled him to see that Spenser's peculiarities were those of his age, that the 'knights and damsels, the tournaments and enchantments, of Spenser' were not oddities but the familiar and admired features of romance, a prevailing literary form of the age, and that 'the fashion of the times' determined Spenser's purpose of becoming a '*romantic Poet*.'²⁹

Warton determined therefore not only to judge but to praise Spenser as a romantic³⁰ poet. He found that as the characteristic appeal of pseudo-classical poetry was to the intellect, to the reason, romantic poetry addressed itself to the feelings, to the imagination. Its excellence, therefore, consisted not in design and proportion, but in interest and variety of detail. The poet's business was 'to engage the fancy, and interest the attention by bold and striking images, in the formation, and the disposition of which, little labour or art was applied. The various and marvelous were the chief sources of delight'.³¹ Hence Spenser had ransacked 'reality and romance', 'truth and fiction' to adorn his 'fairy structure', and Warton revelled in the result, in its very formlessness and richness, which he thought preferable, in a romantic poem, to exactness. 'Exactness in his poem,' he said, 'would have been like the cornice which a painter introduced in the grotto of Calypso. Spenser's beauties are like the flowers in Paradise.'³²

When beauties thus transcend nature, delight goes beyond reason. Warton did not shrink from the logical result of giving rein to imagination; he was willing to recognize the romantic quest for beauties beyond the reach of art, to sacrifice reason and 'nature methodiz'd' in an exaltation of a higher quality which rewarded the reader with a higher kind of enjoyment. 'If the Fairy Queen,' he said, 'be destitute of that arrangement and æconomy which epic severity requires, yet we scarcely regret the loss of these, while their place is so amply supplied by something which more powerfully attracts us: something which engages the affections, the feelings of the heart, rather than the cold approbation of the head. If there be any poem whose graces please, because they are situated beyond the reach of art, and where the force and faculties of creative imagination³³ delight, because they are unassisted and unre-

²⁹*Ibid.* II, p. 72.

³⁰Warton used the word *romantic* as a derivative of *romance*, implying the characteristics of the mediæval romances, and I have used the word frequently in this chapter with that meaning.

³¹*Ibid.* I, p. 22.

³²*Ibid.* I, p. 23.

³³Without the same precision in nomenclature but with equal clearness of idea Warton distinguished between creative and imaginative power in exactly the same way that Coleridge differentiated imagination and fancy. He did not compose exact philosophical definitions of the two qualities, but in a careful contrast between the poetic faculties of Spenser and Ariosto, he made the same distinction. Spenser's

strained by those of deliberate judgment, it is this. In reading Spenser, if the critic is not satisfied, yet the reader is transported.³⁴

When Warton thus made a place for transport in a critical discourse, he had parted company with his contemporaries and opened the way for the whole romantic exaltation of feeling. He had turned from Dr. Johnson, who condemned 'all power of fancy over reason' as a 'degree of insanity',³⁵ and faced toward Blake, who exalted the imagination and called reason the only evil.³⁶ Every propriety of Queen Anne criticism had now been violated. Not satisfied with condemning all previous Spenserian criticism as all but nonsense, Warton dared to place the uncritical reader's delight above the critic's deliberate disapproval, and then to commend that enthusiasm and the beauties that aroused it. In repudiating the pseudo-classical rules, Warton enunciated two revolutionary dicta: there are other critical standards than those of Boileau and the ancients (save the mark!); there are other poetical beauties than those of Pope and 'nature methodiz'd.'

Revolutionary as he was in his enjoyment of Spenser's fable, Warton had not at the time he wrote the *Observations* freed himself from the pseudo-classical theories of versification and he agreed with his predecessors in his discussion of this subject. Although he did not feel the nineteenth century romanticist's enthusiasm for Spenser's versification, he was nevertheless sufficiently the poet to appreciate and to enjoy his success with it. 'It is indeed surprising,' he said, 'that Spenser should execute a poem of uncommon length, with so much spirit and ease, laden as he was with so many shackles, and embarrassed with so complicated a *bondage of riming*. . . . His sense and sound are equally flowing and uninterrupted.'³⁷ Similarly, with respect to language, we neither expect nor find enthusiasm. Warton thought Jonson 'perhaps unreasonable',³⁸ and found the origin of his language in the language of his age, as he found the origin of his design in its romances. Long acquaint-

power, imagination, he described as creative, vital; it endeavours to body forth the unsubstantial, to represent by visible and external symbols the ideal and abstracted. (II, p. 77.) Ariosto's faculty, fancy, he called imitative, lacking in inventive power. (I, p. 308; II, p. 78.) Although Warton at times applied the term *imagination* loosely to both, there was no confusion of ideas; when he used both terms it was with the difference in meaning just described. In speaking of the effect of the marvels of romance upon the poetic faculty he said they 'rouse and invigorate all the powers of imagination' and 'store the fancy with . . . images.' (II, p. 323.)

³⁴*Ibid.* I, p. 24.

³⁵*Rasselas*. Ch. XLIV.

³⁶H. C. Robinson: *Diary*. Ed. Sadler, Boston 1870, II, p. 43.

³⁷*Obs.* I, pp. 168-170.

³⁸In his opinion that 'Spenser, in affecting the ancients, writ no language'. I, p. 184.

ance enabled him to read the *Fairy Queen* with ease; he denied that Spenser's language was either so affected or so obsolete as it was generally supposed, and asserted that 'For many stanzas together we may frequently read him with as much facility as we can the same number of lines in Shakespeare.'³⁹ In his approval and appreciation of Spenser's moral purpose Warton was, of course, nearer to his pseudo-classical predecessors than to his romantic followers; however, without relinquishing that prime virtue of the old school, the solidity which comes from well-established principles, he attained to new virtues, greater catholicity of taste and flexibility of judgment.

In seeking in the literature of and before the sixteenth century and in the manners and customs of the 'spacious times of great Elizabeth' for the explanation of Spenser's poem—so far as explanation of genius is possible—Warton was, as has been said, laying the foundations of modern historical criticism. Some slight progress had been made in this direction before, but without important results. Warton was by no means original in recognizing Spenser's debt to the Italian romances which were so popular in his day, and to Ariosto in particular. And many critics agreed that he was 'led by the prevailing notions of his age to write an irregular and romantic poem.' They, however, regarded his age as one of barbarity and ignorance of the rules, and its literature as unworthy of study and destitute of intrinsic value. No critic before Warton had realized the importance of supplementing an absolute by an historical criticism, of reconstructing, so far as possible, a poet's environment and the conditions under which he worked, in order to judge his poetry. 'In reading the works of a poet who lived in a remote age,' he said, 'it is necessary that we should look back upon the customs and manners which prevailed in that age. We should endeavour to place ourselves in the writer's situation and circumstances. Hence we shall become better enabled to discover how his turn of thinking, and manner of composing, were influenced by familiar appearances and established objects, which are utterly different from those with which we are at present surrounded.'⁴⁰ And, realizing that the neglect of these details was fatal to good criticism, that the 'commentator'⁴¹ whose critical enqui-

³⁹*Ibid.* I, p. 185. This parallel does not greatly help the case in an age when Atterbury could write to Pope that he found 'the hardest part of Chaucer . . . more intelligible' than some parts of Shakespeare and that 'not merely through the faults of the edition, but the obscurity of the writer.' Pope's *Works*, Elwin-Courthope ed. IX, p. 26.

⁴⁰*Obs.* II, p. 71.

⁴¹Warton ably and sharply met Pope's attack on Theobald for including in his edition of Shakespeare a sample of his sources, of "——All such reading as never was read"; and concluded 'If Shakespeare is worth reading, he is worth explain-

ries are employed on Spenser, Jonson, and the rest of our elder poets, will in vain give specimens of his classical erudition, unless, at the same time, he brings to his work a mind intimately acquainted with those books, which though now forgotten, were yet in common use and high repute about the time in which his authors respectively wrote, and which they consequently must have read,⁴² he resolutely reformed his own practice.

Warton not only perceived the necessity of the historical method of studying the older poets, but he had acquired what very few of his contemporaries had attained, sufficient knowledge of the earlier English literature to undertake such a study of Spenser. He embarked upon the study of the *Fairy Queen*, its sources and literary background, with a fund of knowledge which, however much later scholars, who have taken up large holdings in the territory charted by that pioneer, may unjustly scorn its superficiality or inexactness, was for that time quite exceptional, and which could not fail to illuminate the poem to the point of transfiguration. Every reader of Spenser had accepted his statement that he took Ariosto as his model, but no one before Warton had remarked another model, one closer in respect of matter, which the poet no doubt thought too obvious to mention, the old romances of chivalry. Warton observed that where Spenser's plan is least like Ariosto's, it most resembles the romances; that, although he 'formed his Faerie Queene upon the fanciful plan of Ariosto', he formed the particular adventures of his knight upon the romances. 'Spenser's first book is,' he said, 'a regular and precise imitation of such a series of action as we frequently find in books of chivalry.'⁴³

In proof of Spenser's indebtedness to the romances Warton cited the prevalence of romances of chivalry in his day, and pointed out particular borrowings from this popular poetry. In the first place he insisted again and again not only that the 'encounters of chivalry' which appeared extraordinary to modern eyes were familiar to readers in Spenser's day,⁴⁴ but that the practices of chivalry were even continued

ing; and the researches used for so valuable and elegant a purpose, merit the thanks of genius and candour, not the satire of prejudice and ignorance.' II, p. 319. In similar vein he rebuked such of his own critics as found his quotations from the romances 'trifling and uninteresting': 'such readers can have no taste for Spenser.' I, p. 91.

⁴²*Ibid.* II, pp. 317-18.

⁴³*Ibid.* I, p. 26.

⁴⁴And even later to the time of Milton. Warton found Milton's 'mind deeply tintured with romance reading' and his imagination and poetry affected thereby. I, p. 257 and p. 350. Even Dryden wanted to write an epic about Arthur or the Black Prince but on the model of Virgil and Spenser, not Spenser and the romances. *Essay on Satire*.

to some extent.⁴⁵ Warton's close acquaintance with the literature of the sixteenth century and before showed him that the matter of the romances was common property and had permeated other works than those of mediæval poets. He discovered that the story of Arthur, from which Spenser borrowed most, was so generally known and so great a favourite that incidents from it were made the basis for entertainment of Elizabeth at Kenilworth,⁴⁶ and that Arthur and his knights were alluded to by writers so various as Caxton, Aseham, Sidney, Puttenham, Bacon, and Jonson;⁴⁷ that even Ariosto⁴⁸ himself borrowed from the story of Arthur. At the same time his first-hand knowledge of the romances enabled him to point out among those which most directly influenced the *Fairy Queen* Malory's *Morte Arthur*, the largest contributor, of course, from which such details as the story of Sir Tristram, King Ryence and the Mantle of Beards, the Holy Grail, and the Blatant Beast were drawn;⁴⁹ *Bevis of Southampton*, which furnished the incident of the well of marvelous healing power;⁵⁰ the ballad of the Boy and the Mantle, from the French romance, *Le Court Mantel*, which suggested Spenser's conceit of Florimel's girdle.⁵¹ Warton also carefully discussed Spenser's fairy mythology, which supplanted the classical mythology as his romantic adventures replaced those of antiquity,

⁴⁵*Obs.* I, p. 27 and II, pp. 71-72. Warton cited Holinshed's *Chronicles* (Stowe's contin.) where is an account of a tourney for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth, in which Fulke Greville and Sir Philip Sidney, among others, entered the lists. *Holin. Chronicles*, ed. 1808. IV, p. 437 ff.

⁴⁶Warton quotes Laneham's '*Letter wherein part of the Entertainment untoo the Queen's Majesty at Killinworth Castl in Worwicksheer in this Soomer's progress, 1575, is signified*,' and Gascoigne's *Pleasures of Kenilworth Castle, Works*, 1576. *Obs.* I, pp. 41, 43.

⁴⁷*Ibid.* I, pp. 50-74.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* I, pp. 53-57.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* I, pp. 27-57.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* I, pp. 69-71.

⁵¹*Ibid.* I, p. 76. Warton says an 'ingenious correspondent communicated' to him this 'old ballad or metrical romance.' Part of *Le Court Mantel* he found in Sainte Palaye's *Memoires sur l'ancienne Chevalerie*, 1760. Other details, which could not be traced to particular romances, Warton attributed to 'a mind strongly tinged with romantic ideas.' One of these, the custom of knights swearing on their swords, Upton had explained as derived from the custom of the Huns and Goths, related by Jornandes and Ammianus Marcellinus, but Warton pointed out that it was much more probably derived from the more familiar romances. II, p. 65. A Bodleian MS. containing *Sir Degore* and other romances is quoted from and described, II, pp. 5-9.

ascribing its origin to romance and folk-lore of Celtic and ultimately Oriental origin.⁵²

As in the case of mediæval romance, Warton was the first critic to consider in any detail Spenser's indebtedness to Chaucer. Antiquarians and a few poets had been mildly interested in Chaucer, but his importance for the study of the origins of English poetry had been ignored in the prevalent delusion that the classics were the ultimate sources of poetry. Dryden, to be sure, had remarked that Spenser imitated Chaucer's language,⁵³ and subsequent readers, including Warton, concurred. But it still remained for Warton to point out that Spenser was also indebted to Chaucer for ideas, and to show the extent and nature of his debt by collecting 'specimens of Spenser's imitations from Chaucer, both of language and sentiment.'⁵⁴ Without, of course, attempting to exhaust the subject, Warton collected enough parallel passages to prove that Spenser was not only an 'attentive reader and professed admirer', but also an imitator of Chaucer. For example, he pointed out that the list of trees in the wood of error was more like Chaucer's in the *Assembly of Fowls* than like similar passages in classical poets mentioned by Jortin;⁵⁵ that he had borrowed the magic mirror which Merlin gave Ryence from the *Squire's Tale*,⁵⁶ and from the *Romance of the Rose*, the conceit of Cupid dressed in flowers.⁵⁷ By a careful comparison with Chaucer's language, Warton was able to explain some doubtful passages as well as to show Spenser's draughts from 'the well of English undefiled.'

One can scarcely overestimate the importance of Warton's evident first-hand knowledge of Chaucer in an age when he was principally known only through Dryden's and Pope's garbled modernizations, or Milton's reference to him who

..... 'left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold.'

⁵²*Ibid.* I, pp. 77-89. Warton often used the terms Celtic and Norse very loosely without recognizing the difference. Like Huet and Mallet and other students of romance he was misled by the absurd and fanciful ethnologies in vogue in the 17th and 18th centuries. For his theory of romance see his dissertation 'On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe' prefixed to the first volume of his *History of English Poetry*, 1774.

⁵³*Essay on Satire*. Dryden frequently referred to Chaucer as Spenser's master, meaning in the matter of language. See also *Dedication of the Pastorals* and *Preface to the Fables*.

⁵⁴Section V 'Of Spenser's Imitations from Chaucer.'

⁵⁵In his *Remarks on Spenser's Poems*. See *Observations* I, p. 190.

⁵⁶*Ibid.* I, p. 205. Warton showed many instances of Spenser's interest in Cambuscan, including his continuation of part of the story. See also pp. 210 ff.

⁵⁷*Ibid.* I, p. 221.

Warton was not satisfied that Chaucer should be studied merely to illustrate Spenser; he recognized his intrinsic value as well, and suffered his enthusiasm for Chaucer to interrupt the thread of his criticism of Spenser, while he lauded and recommended to his neglectful age the charms of the older poet.⁵⁸ To be sure his reasons for admiring Chaucer were somewhat too romantic to convince an age that preferred regular beauties; his 'romantic arguments', 'wildness of painting', 'simplicity and antiquity of expression', though 'pleasing to the imagination' and calculated to 'transport us into some fairy region', were certainly not the qualities to attract Upton or Hughes or Dr. Johnson. Unlike the pseudo-classical admirers of Chaucer, Warton held that to read modern imitations was not to know Chaucer; that to provide such substitutes was to contribute rather to the neglect than to the popularity of the original. With characteristic soundness of scholarship he condemned the prevalence of translations because they encouraged 'indolence and illiteracy', displaced the originals and thus gradually vitiated public taste.⁵⁹

The study of Spenser's age yielded the third element which Warton introduced into Spenserian criticism—the influence of the mediæval moralities and allegorical masques. Warton's study of Spenser's allegory is of quite another sort than Hughes's essay. Instead of trying to concoct a set of *a priori* rules for a kind of epic which should find its justification in its moral, Warton, as usual, was concerned with forms of allegory as they actually existed and were familiar to his poet, and with the history of allegorical poetry in England. Without denying the important influence of Ariosto, he pointed out that his predecessors had erred in thinking the *Orlando Furioso* a sufficient model; he saw that the characters of Spenser's allegory much more resembled the 'emblematical personages, visibly decorated with their proper attributes, and actually endued with speech, motion and life',⁶⁰ with which Spenser was familiar upon the stage, than the less symbolical characters of Ariosto. Warton could support his position by quoting references in the *Fairy*

⁵⁸Warton found opportunity to express more fully his enthusiasm for Chaucer in a detailed study comparable to this of Spenser, in his *History of English Poetry* twenty years later.

⁵⁹*Obs.* I, pp. 269-71. Warton extended his criticism to translations of classical authors as well. Of course the greatest of the classicists, Dryden and Johnson, realized the limits of translation, that it was only a makeshift. See *Preface to translation of Ovid's epistle, to Sylvæ and to the Fables*, and Boswell's *Johnson*, Hill ed. III, p. 36. But the popularity of Dryden's translations and the large number of translations and imitations that appeared during his and succeeding generations, justified Warton's criticism.

⁶⁰*Obs.* II, p. 78.

Queen to masques and dumb shows,⁶¹ and by tracing somewhat the progress of allegory in English poetry before Spenser.⁶² It is characteristic that he should not have been satisfied to observe that allegory was popular in Spenser's age, but that he should wish to explain it by a 'retrospect of English poetry from the age of Spenser.'⁶³ Superficial and hasty as this survey is, it must have confirmed Warton's opinion that a thorough exploration of early English poetry was needed, and so anticipated his *magnum opus*. And we can find little fault with its conclusions, even when he says that this poetry 'principally consisted in visions and allegories', when he could add as a matter of information, 'there are, indeed, the writings of some English poets now remaining, who wrote before Gower or Chaucer.'

In rejecting the conclusions of pseudo-classical criticism, in regarding Spenser as the heir of the middle ages, Warton did not by any means overlook the influence of the renaissance, of the classical revival, upon his poetry. His study of the classical sources from which Spenser embellished his plan⁶⁴ is as careful and as suggestive as his study of the mediæval sources; it is not only so strikingly new. His attack on Sealiger, who subordinated a comparative method to the demonstration of *a priori* conclusions, shows that he was a sounder classicist than that pseudo-classical leader. Sealiger, he said, more than once 'betrayed his ignorance of the nature of ancient poetry';⁶⁵ he 'had no notion of simple and genuine beauty; nor had ever considered the manners and customs which prevailed in early times.'⁶⁶ Warton was a true classicist in his admiration for Homer and Aristotle, and in his recognition of them as 'the genuine and uncorrupted sources of ancient poetry and ancient criticism';⁶⁷ but, as has been said, he did not make the mistake of supposing them the sources of modern poetry and criticism as well.

Warton shows in this essay an extraordinarily clear recognition of the relation between classical, mediæval and modern literatures, and a corresponding adaptation of criticism to it. By a wide application of

⁶¹*Ibid.* II, pp. 78-81. 'Spenser expressly denominates his most exquisite groupe of allegorical figures, the *Maske of Cupid*. Thus, without recurring to conjecture, his own words evidently demonstrate that he sometimes had representations of this sort in his eye.'

⁶²*Ibid.* II, pp. 93-103. Beginning with Adam Davy and the author of *Piers Plowman*. Like Spence, Warton recognized in Sackville's *Induction* the nearest approach to Spenser, and a probable source of influence upon him.

⁶³*Ibid.* II, p. 92.

⁶⁴*Ibid.* I, pp. 92-156.

⁶⁵*Ibid.* I, p. 147.

⁶⁶*Ibid.* I, p. 133.

⁶⁷*Ibid.* I, p. 1.

the historical method he saw that English poetry was the joint product of two principal strains, the ancient or classical, and the mediaeval or romantic; and that the poet or critic who neglected either disclaimed half his birthright. The poetry of Spenser's age, Warton perceived, drew from both sources. Although the study of the ancient models was renewed, the 'romantic manner of poetical composition introduced and established by the Provençal bards' was not superseded by a 'new and more legitimate taste of writing.' And Warton as a critic accepted—as Sealiger would not—the results of his historical study: he admired and desired the characteristic merits of classical poetry, 'justness of thought and design', 'decorum', 'uniformity',⁶⁸ he 'so far conformed to the reigning maxims of modern criticism, as . . . to recommend classical propriety';⁶⁹ but he wished them completed and adorned with the peculiar imaginative beauties of the 'dark ages', those fictions which 'rouse and invigorate all the powers of imagination [and] store the fancy with those sublime and charming images, which true poetry best delights to display.'⁷⁰

The inevitable result of recognizing the relation between the classical and romantic sources of literature was contempt for pseudo-classicism, for those poets and critics who rejected the beauties of romance for the less natural perfections approved by the classical and French theorists, who aped the ancients without knowing them and despised their own romantic ancestry. The greatest English poets, Warton perceived, were those who combined both elements in their poetry; those who rejected either fell short of the highest rank. And therefore he perceived the loss to English poetry when, after the decline of romance and allegory, 'a poetry succeeded, in which imagination gave way to correctness, sublimity of description to delicacy of sentiment, and majestic imagery to conceit and epigram.' Warton's brief summary of this poetry points out its weakness. 'Poets began now to be more attentive to words, than to things and objects. The nicer beauties of happy expression were preferred to the daring strokes of great conception. Satire, that bane of the sublime, was imported from France. The muses were debauched at court; and polite life, and familiar manners, became their only themes. The simple dignity of Milton⁷¹ was either entirely neglected, or mistaken for bombast and insipidity, by the refined readers of a dissolute age, whose taste and morals were equally vitiated.'⁷²

⁶⁸*Ibid.* I, p. 2.

⁶⁹*Ibid.* II, pp. 324-5.

⁷⁰*Ibid.* II, pp. 322-3.

⁷¹There is a digression on Milton in the *Observations* (I, pp. 335-351), the prelude to his edition of Milton, 1785 and 1791.

⁷²*Ibid.* II, pp. 106-8.

The culmination—perhaps the crowning—glory of Warton's first piece of critical writing is his keen delight in the task. Addison had praised and popularized criticism,⁷³ but with reservations; and most people—even until recent times (if indeed the idea has now wholly disappeared from the earth)—would agree with Warton that the 'business of criticism is commonly laborious and dry.' Yet he affirms that his work 'has proved a most agreeable task;' that it has 'more frequently amused than fatigued (his) attention,' and that 'much of the pleasure that Spenser experienced in composing the *Fairy Queen*, must, in some measure, be shared by his commentator; and the critic, on this occasion, may speak in the words, and with the rapture, of the poet,—

The wayes through which my weary steppes I guyde
In this *delightfull land of faerie*,
Are so exceeding spacious and wyde,
And sprinkled with such sweet varietie
Of all that pleasant is to ear or eye,
That I nigh ravisht with rare thoughts delight,
My tedious travel do forgett thereby:
And when I gin to feele decay of might,
It strength to me supplies, and cheares my dulled spright.

Warton's real classicism and his endeavours to carry his contemporaries with him by emphasizing wherever possible his accord with them blinded them for a time to the strongly revolutionary import of the *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, and the book was well received by pseudo-classical readers. Its scholarly merits and the impulse it gave to the study of literature were generously praised by Dr. Johnson,⁷⁴ who could partly appreciate the merits of the historical method, but would not emulate them. This is however scarcely a fair test, for the 'watch-dog of classicism', although an indifferent scholar when compared with Warton, had an almost omnivorous thirst for knowledge, and although he despised research for its own sake, his nearest sympathy with the romantic movement was when its researches tended to increase the sum of human knowledge. Warburton was delighted with the *Ob-*

⁷³In his critical essays in the *Spectator*.

⁷⁴July 16, 1754. 'I now pay you a very honest acknowledgement, for the advancement of the literature of our native country. You have shewn to all, who shall hereafter attempt the study of our ancient authours, the way to success; by directing them to the perusal of the books which those authours had read. Of this method, Hughes and men much greater than Hughes, seem never to have thought. The reason why the authours, which are yet read, of the sixteenth century, are so little understood, is, that they are read alone; and no help is borrowed from those who lived with them, or before them.' Boswell's *Johnson*, Hill ed. I, p. 270.

servations, and told Warton so.⁷⁵ Walpole complimented the author upon it, though he had no fondness for Spenser.⁷⁶ The reviewer for the *Monthly Review*⁷⁷ showed little critical perception. Although he discussed the book section by section, he discovered nothing extraordinary in it, nothing but the usual influence of Ariosto, defects of the language, parallel passage and learned citation; and he reached the height of inadequacy when he thus commended Warton's learning: 'Upon the whole, Mr. Warton seems to have studied his author with much attention, and has obliged us with no bad prelude for the edition, of which he advises us.'⁷⁸ His acquaintance with our earliest writers must have qualified him with such a relish of the *Anglo-Saxon* dialect, as few poets, since *Prior*, seem to have imbibed.' A scurrilous anonymous pamphlet, *The Observer Observ'd, or Remarks on a certain curious Tract, intitl'd, Observations on the Faire Queen of Spenser, by Thomas Warton, A. M., etc.*, which appeared two years after the *Observations*, deserved the harsh treatment it received at the hands of the reviewers.⁷⁹ The immediate results on the side of Spenserian criticism were not striking. Two editions of the *Fairy Queen*, by John Upton and Ralph Church, appeared in 1758. Of these, the first was accused at once of borrowing without acknowledgment from Warton's *Observations*;⁸⁰ the second is described as having notes little enlightening;⁸¹ both editors were still measuring Spenser by the ancients.⁸²

From this time the Spenserian movement was poetical. Warton's essay put a new seal of critical approval upon the *Fairy Queen* and

⁷⁵Warburton's *Letters*, No. CLVII, Nov. 30, 1762. *Works*, London, 1809. XIII, p. 338.

⁷⁶Walpole to Warton, October 30, 1767. Walpole's *Letters*, ed. cit. VII, p. 144.

⁷⁷August, 1754, XI, pp. 112-124.

⁷⁸Perhaps Upton's Edition of the *Fairy Queen*, which is frequently referred to in the second edition of the *Observations*. There is ample evidence in Johnson's letters and Warton's comments upon them, as well as in his own manuscript notes in his copy of Spenser's *Works* that he intended a companion work of remarks on the best of Spenser's works, but this made so little progress that it cannot have been generally known. See Boswell's *Johnson*, I, p. 276, and Warton's copy of Spenser's *Works*, ed. 1617. This quarto volume, which I have examined in the British Museum, contains copious notes which subsequently formed the basis for the *Observations*. The notes continue partly through the shorter poems as well as the *Fairy Queen*. Some of them were evidently made for the second edition, for they contain references to Upton's edition.

⁷⁹*Mon. Rev.* July, 1756, XV, p. 90. *Crit. Rev.* May, 1756, I, p. 374.

⁸⁰*An impartial Estimate of the Rev. Mr. Upton's notes on the Fairy Queen*, reviewed in *Crit. Rev.* VIII, p. 82 ff.

⁸¹*Crit. Rev.* VII, p. 106.

⁸²H. E. Cory, : *Op. cit.*, pp. 149-50.

Spenser's position as the poet's poet was established with the new school. He was no longer regarded judiciously as an admirable poet who unfortunately chose inferior models for verse and fable with which to present his moral; he was enthusiastically adopted as an inexhaustible source of poetic inspiration, of imagination, of charming imagery, of rich colour, of elusive mystery, of melodious verse.

Although Warton's pseudo-classical contemporaries did not perceive the full significance of his study of Spenser, his general programme began to be accepted and followed; and his encouragement of the study of mediæval institutions and literature gave a great impetus to the new romantic movement. His followers were, however, often credited with the originality of their master, and their work was apt to arouse stronger protest from the pseudo-classicists.⁸³ When Hurd's very romantic *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* appeared, they were credited with having influenced Warton to greater tolerance of romance and chivalry.⁸⁴ This unjust conclusion was derived no doubt from the tone of greater confidence that Hurd was able to assume. Following both the Wartons, he sharpened the distinction between the prevailing pseudo-classical school of poetry and what he called the Gothic; insisted upon the independence of its standards; and even maintained the superiority

⁸³While even Dr. Johnson had only praise for the *Observations*, Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope*, on the whole a less revolutionary piece of criticism, touched a more sensitive point. He found the essay instructive, and recommended it as a 'just specimen of literary moderation.' Johnson's *Works*, ed. 1825, V, p. 670. But as an attack on the reputation of the favourite Augustan poet, its drift was evident, and pernicious. This heresy was for him an explanation of Warton's delay in continuing it. 'I suppose he finds himself a little disappointed, in not having been able to persuade the world to be of his opinion as to Pope.' Boswell's *Johnson*, I, p. 448.

⁸⁴*Crit. Rev.* XVI, p. 220. It is perfectly evident however that the debt does not lie on that side. Hurd's *Letters* and the second edition of the *Observations* appeared in the same year, which would almost conclusively preclude any borrowings from the first for the second. But Warton's first edition, eight years before, had enough of chivalry and romance to kindle a mind in sympathy. Hurd was a less thorough student of the old romances themselves than Warton was. He seems to have known them through a French work, probably Sainte Palaye's *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie* (1750), for he said, 'Not that I shall make a merit with you in having perused these barbarous volumes myself. . . . Thanks to the curiosity of certain painful collectors, this knowledge may be obtained at a cheaper rate. And I think it sufficient to refer you to a learned and very elaborate memoir of a French writer.' *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*. Letter IV, Hurd's *Works*, ed. 1811, IV, p. 260. Warton also knew this French work (Ste. Palaye's at least) and quoted from it, *Observations*, I, p. 76, and frequently in his *History of English Poetry*.

of its subjects.⁸⁵ In all this however he made no real departure from Warton, the difference being one of emphasis; Hurd gave an important impetus to the movement his master had begun. But with all his modernity, his admiration for the growing school of imaginative poets, he lacked Warton's faith in his school; he had no forward view, but looked back on the past with regret, and toward the future without hope.⁸⁶

On the side of pure literary criticism Warton's first and most important follower was his elder brother, Joseph, whose *Essay on Pope* was a further application of his critical theories to the reigning favourite. This very remarkable book was the first extensive and serious attack upon Pope's supremacy as a poet, and it is credited with two very important contributions to the romantic movement: the overthrow of Pope and his school; and the substitution of new models, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the modern school;⁸⁷ it contained the first explicit statement of the new poetic theories.⁸⁸

⁸⁵'May there not be something in the *Gothic* Romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius, and to the ends of poetry?' Hurd, IV, p. 239. 'Under this idea then of a Gothic, not classical poem, the *Fairy Queen* is to be read and criticized.' IV, p. 292. 'So far as the heroic and *Gothic* manners are the same, the pictures of each, . . . must be equally entertaining. But I go further, and maintain that the circumstances, in which they differ, are clearly to the advantage of the *Gothic* designers . . . could Homer 'have seen . . . the manners of the feudal ages, I make no doubt but he would certainly have preferred the latter,' because of "*the improved gallantry of the Gothic Knights; and the superior solemnity of their superstitious*.'" IV, p. 280.

⁸⁶Hurd's *Letters*, IV, p. 350.

⁸⁷Joseph Warton placed Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, 'our only three sublime and pathetic poets,' in the first class, at the head of English poets. The object of the essay was to determine Pope's place in the list. 'I revere the memory of POPE,' he said, 'I respect and honour his abilities; but I do not think him at the head of his profession. In other words, in that species of poetry wherein POPE excelled, he is superior to all mankind; and I only say, that this species of poetry is not the most excellent one of the art.' Dedication, pp. i-ii. 'The sublime and pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poetry. What is there transcendently sublime or pathetic in POPE?' Ded., p. vi. After a careful examination of all Pope's works Joseph Warton assigned him the highest place in the second class, below Milton and above Dryden. He was given a place above other modern English poets because of the 'excellencies of his works in general, and taken all together; for there are parts and passages in other modern authors, in Young and in Thomson, for instance, equal to any of POPE, and he has written nothing in a strain so truly sublime, as the *Bard of Gray*.' II, p. 405. References are to the fifth edition, 2 vols. 1806.

⁸⁸The first volume of Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope* appeared in 1756, two years after the *Observations*. Though its iconoclasm was more apparent, the later essay made little advance in the way of new theory upon the earlier one, and there is rather more of hedging in the discussion of Pope than in that of Spenser.

Warton's *Observations on the Faerie Queene* thus wrought so great and so salutary a change in literary criticism that it is hardly possible to exaggerate its importance. Here first the historical method was appreciated and extensively employed. Here first the pseudo-classicism of the age of Pope was exposed. Here first is maintained a nice and difficult balance between classical and romantic criticism: without underestimating the influence of classical literature upon the development of English poetry, Warton first insisted that due attention be paid the neglected literature of the Middle Ages, which with quite independent but equally legitimate traditions contributed richly not only to the poetry of Spenser but to all great poetry since. His strength lies in the solidity and the inclusiveness of his critical principles. Without being carried away by romantic enthusiasm to disregard the classics, he saw and accounted for a difference between modern and ancient poetry and adapted his criticism to poetry as he found it instead of trying to conform poetry to rules which were foreign to it. This new criticism exposed the fatal weakness in the prevailing pseudo-classical poetry and criticism; it showed the folly of judging either single poems or national literatures as independent and detached, and the necessity of considering them in relation to the national life and literature to which they belong. Thus Warton's freedom from prejudice and preconceived standards, his interest in the human being who writes poetry, and the influences both social and literary which surround him, his—for that day—extraordinary knowledge of all those conditions, enabled him to become the founder of a new school of criticism.

CHAPTER IV

ACADEMIC LIFE. 1747-1772

Warton had not intended to have done with Spenser when he published his criticism of the *Faerie Queene*, but purposed to follow it with a similar treatment of the shorter poems. His own copy of Spenser's works, the wide margins of which he covered with notes of all sorts,—glosses, comparisons with other poems, references to romances, illustrative and interpretive comments,—show that he carried out this plan for many of the poems. But tutorial duties hindered; he permitted his interest to be diverted to other matters, and the work went no further. Dr. Johnson's letters to him during the winter following the publication of the *Observations* show that he was urging him to the completion of work which he perceived was languishing. In November he wrote, 'I am glad of your hindrance in your Spenserian design,¹ yet I would not have it delayed. Three hours a day stolen from sleep and amusement will produce it.'² No one knew better than Dr. Johnson the temptations to procrastinate; therefore he wrote again with anxiety on the same subject:— 'Where hangs the new volume? Can I help? Let not the past labour be lost, for want of a little more: but snatch what time you can from the Hall, and the pupils, and the coffee-house, and the parks, and complete your design.'³

Although Warton abandoned this project of making a complete commentary on Spenser's works, he undertook to prepare a second edition of the *Observations*, in which he made some additions and corrections, but no material changes. When Percy undertook seriously to publish a collection of old ballads, he promptly engaged Warton's interest and assistance by sending him a few ballads, including the *Boy and the Mantle*, the source of Spenser's conceit of Florimel's girdle. Warton was delighted with Percy's plan and with the suggestion for the improvement of his own work, and wrote to Percy, 'The old Ballads are extremely curious, & I heartily wish you success in your intended publication.

¹" 'Of publishing a volume of observations on the best of Spenser's works. It was hindered by my taking pupils in this College.' Warton." Boswell's *Johnson*, ed. cit., I, p. 276, note.

²Nov. 28, 1754. *Ibid.*

³Feb. 4, 1754, *Ibid.*, p. 279.

Spenser certainly had the *Boy & the Mantle* in view. I must beg leave to keep them all a little time longer as they will much enrich & illustrate a new edition of that work which you are pleased to place in so favourable a Light. It is already in the Press.⁴ He was careful, however, not to anticipate Perey's scheme by publishing extracts from the ballads and romances, and explained in his next letter: 'My Design is to give abstracts only of what you have sent me.'⁵ At the same time he expressed his appreciation of the 'ingenious Remarks on my book, which I receive as useful hints for the improvement of my new Edition.'⁶

Warton immediately busied himself helping Perey with his new plan. But at the same time he asked that Perey's and Lye's further remarks on his own work be sent 'in a Post or two, as we go on very quickly at Press, & I can insert them in the *last Section*,' adding, 'Indeed I am much obliged to you for what you have already communicated, & the kind offer you make, in your last, of searching the libraries of your neighbourhood, to assist me in any future pursuit'.⁷ His next letter, written during the following summer, announced 'Spenser' as 'just ready for publication,'⁸ and it immediately appeared.

Somewhat earlier, perhaps even before the publication of the *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, Warton was at work on a translation of Apollonius Rhodius,⁹ but, although Johnson urged him to continue it¹⁰ as he had urged him to complete the observations on Spenser,—he seems to have had both of them under way at the same time,¹¹—it met the same fate. It seems to have been regarded for some time rather as a work deferred than abandoned, for in 1770 Dr. Barnard wrote him in

⁴Trin. Coll. Oxon. Jun. 19, 1761, Warton MSS. in Harvard College Library, fol. 2.

⁵Jul. 11, 1761, same MSS. fol. 4.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Nov. 23, 1761, same MSS. fol. 6.

⁸Jul. 17, 1762, same MSS. fol. 9.

⁹Among the Warton papers in Trinity College Library, Oxford, is a small notebook of notes upon Apollonius and a synopsis of the *Argonautica*. See also Mant, *Op. cit.*, p. xxxiv. Mant's informant thought a translation of Homer was also intended. 'Thomas Warton, January 21, 1752, agreed to translate the *Argonautics* of Apollonius Rhodius for 80 pounds.' *Willis's Current Notes*, Nov. 1854, p. 90. See also Boswell's *Johnson*, I, p. 289, note.

¹⁰May 13, 1755. 'How goes Apollonius? Don't let him be forgotten. Some things of this kind must be done, to keep us up.' *Ibid.*

¹¹See Wooll, *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

¹²Dr. Jeffrey Ekins. Evidently the reply was satisfactory, for the next year, 1771, his *Loves of Medea and Jason*; . . . translated from the *Greek of Apollonius Rhodius's Argonautics* was published.

behalf of a friend of his¹¹ to know whether or not he had definitely given up the project.

After the completion of the second edition of Spenser, Warton's researches in English literature were somewhat vicarious, although no doubt his efforts in Percy's behalf were of some value to his collections for the history of poetry. His previous studies in early English poetry for the *Observations* made him invaluable to Percy in the extensive projects which he undertook with remarkable susceptibility to the growing interest of his age in the older poetry. Percy's first undertakings of this sort, the editions of Buckingham¹² and of Surrey,¹³—which how-

¹²An edition of the Works of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, with an account of his Life . . . and a new key to the *Rehearsal*, was agreed upon between Percy and Tonson, June 12, 1761 and most of it then printed; it was resumed in 1795, but never completed. (See Nichols: *Lit. Illus.* VI, p. 556, *Lit. Anec.* III, p. 161, note, and *Arber Reprints*, XIII, introd.) I print all the extracts from Warton's letters to Percy relative to this undertaking as they partly show the nature and extent of Warton's help.

'The Pieces of Buckingham &c, which you mention, are not in the Bodleian; nor is there any circumstance relating to the Duke in Aubrey's Papers.' Jun. 19, 1761 (Harv. MSS. fol. 2). 'I have looked over the Letter to Osborne [?] in the Bodleian, & find no striking marks of Buckingham; nor, upon the whole, do I think it written by him. If I hear of those Editions of the *Rehearsal* you mention, I will let you know.' Oxon. Nov. 23, 1761 (same MSS. fol. 6). 'At my Return to Oxford, which will be about the tenth of next October, I will carefully transcribe the MSS. you mention relating to Buckingham.' Winchester, Sept. 4, 1762 (same MSS. fol. 11). 'You shall receive a copy of the *D. of Buckingham's MSS.* with the rest. . . . I imagine you must know, that B. . . . [?] in the Strand, lately published a *Catalogue of the D. of Buckingham's Pictures; with his Life by Brian Fairfax never before printed.*' What sort of a thing it is I know not.' Oxon. Nov. 5, 1762, (same MSS. fol. 14). 'Next week you will receive MSS. *D. Buckingham.*' Oxon. Nov. 12, 1762 (same MSS. fol. 15). 'I presume you know there is a *Life of Buckingham* in the last new volume of the *Biographia.*' Oxon. Mar. 14, 1763 (same MSS. fol. 22).

¹³The edition of Surrey was agreed upon with Tonson Mar. 24, 1763, and was printed in one volume, but was similarly delayed, and nearly the whole impression was destroyed by fire in 1808. (*Lit. Illus.* VI, p. 560). Only four copies are known to have survived, but these probably do not include the copy mentioned in Warton's letter of Feb. 26, 1767, below, which Percy had sent to him, and which was sold with the rest of Warton's library. See *A Catalogue of books*, [being the libraries of Dr. Joseph Warton, Thomas Warton . . . and others] *to be sold by Thomas Payne*, London, 1801.

As before I print extracts from Warton's letters to Percy referring to this work.

'I have found out . . . *Ld. Surrey's blank verse Translation*, but fear I shall

a. 1758, with advertisement, by Horace Walpole. See ed. of *The Rehearsal* in the *Arber Reprints*, vol. XIII, and *Dict. Nat. Biog.* art. Villiers.

ever were never published—Warton encouraged and assisted as much as possible by searching for editions, and securing transcripts, and urging the continuation of the work when he perceived it to be languishing. He probably helped little with the proposed edition of the *Spectator*,¹⁴ although he was interested in it.¹⁵ His help was, of course, most valuable in the preparation of Percy's folio manuscript of old poems for

not be able to transmitt them to you while I stay in town. I will however leave directions about it.' London, Jan. 1, 1763 (Harv. MSS. as above, fol. 20).

'I must beg your Patience for . . . Surrey a little longer.' London, Jan. 9, 1763 (same MSS. fol. 21). 'By Mr. Garrick's and Dr. Hoadly's Interest, I have procured, and have now in my hands, Surrey's Translation into blank verse of the second & fourth books of the *Æneid*, for Tottel, 1557. It is a most curious specimen of early blank verse, & will prove a valuable Restoration to Lord Surrey's Works. It belongs to a Mr. Warner of London, who is a great black-letter Critic. How shall I send it to you?' Oxon. Mar. 14, 1763 (Same MSS. fol. 22). 'If you prosecute the Edition of Surrey's Poems, I shall be happy to be employed in sending you all the assistance which our Oxford Repositories afford.' Trin. Coll. Dec. 5, 1764 (Same MSS. fol. 29). 'The Edition of Surrey, 1557, I know not where to borrow.' Oxon. Jun. 15, 1765 (Same MSS. fol. 30).

'Can I be of any further assistance in the new edition of antient Songs, or of Lord Surrey? . . . I beg a sight of what is printed of Surrey as soon as you conveniently can send it.' Oxon. Nov. 29, 1766 (Same MSS. fol. 28).

'I like your Text of Surrey very much: and shall be extremely glad to see your Notes and Life. I hope, they are in Forwardness. If you intend a Table of various Readings, I could gett Collections of the Bodleian Copies.' Trin. Coll. Oxon. Feb. 26, 1767 (Same MSS. fol. 31).

'I despair of finding any Editions of Surrey in the private Libraries; but will however examine the Catalogues.' Trin. Coll. Oxon. Apr. 21, 1767 (Same MSS. fol. 32).

'I have lately had a Letter from Dr. Hoadly, by whose means I lent you an Edition of *Surrey* belonging to Mr. Warner. It seems Mr. Warner wants the Book, for a work he has now in hand; and would be extremely glad if you would return it to him at Woodford Row, Essex, or Will's Coffee house Lincolns inn fields. When he has done with it, he will return it to you again. He does not mean to keep it long. I think I likewise lent you a book of Dr. Hoadly's, *Surry's Translation of part of Virgil*. At your Leisure you may return that to me next October at Oxford. You will excuse me for mentioning these Particulars. But Dr. Hoadly desired me to write to you on the Subject.' Winton. Sept. 13, 1770 (Same MSS. fol. 38).

¹⁴See letters to Tonson and agreement with him, 1764, *Lit. Illus.* VI, pp. 557 ff.

¹⁵The following communication to Percy was obviously not his first upon the subject. 'I have mentioned your Scheme of the *Spectators*, &c. to my brother and Dr. Hoadly long since; but will remember to renew my applications, in the most effectual way, when I see them next long vacation.' Oxon. Jun. 15, 1765 (Same MSS. fol. 30).

publication. One of the first scholars to whom Percy appealed for approval and help with this project, Warton was indefatigable in his efforts to assist, ransacking the Oxford libraries,¹⁶ his own collections and those of his friends, comparing manuscript and other versions of the poems,¹⁷ looking up additions to the collection and to the notes,¹⁸ and

¹⁶They however yielded little at first: 'We have nothing, as I recollect, in our Libraries which will contribute to your Scheme.' Trin. Coll. Oxon. Jun. 19, 1761 (Same MSS. fol. 2). 'Was there any thing in our public or private Libraries which would contribute to your scheme, I would transcribe & transmitt them with pleasure. But I am sorry to say that we are totally destitute of Treasures of this sort.' Jul. 11, 1761 (Same, fol. 4).

¹⁷For example, for the three ballads relating to Guy of Warwick, of which Percy published only *Guy & Amarant* and *The Legend of Sir Guy*, based upon *Guy & Phillis* in the original, Warton furnished the following pretty correct data: 'I know of no MSS. poem of Guy. I am however of opinion, that the Piece, of which you sent me a specimen, is probably Philips's; as the style is agreeable to his age, & the composition not bad. I have some notion that I once saw a Poem called *Guy Earl of Warwick* in the *Harleian Miscellany*; but I can't be positive. Among Wood's Codd. impress. in Mus. Ashmol. is a Poem called "*The Famous History of Guy Earl of Warwick*," by Sam: Rowlands, 1649. It is a Mighty poor thing, & certainly different from your Specimen. I know of no copy of the Harl. Miscell. here; otherwise I would consult it for you.' Oxon Jul. 17, 1762 (same, fol. 9). Warton's memory, to which he trusted for much of the next communication, was somewhat at fault, for he confuses Rowland's modern version with some fragments found in the cover of an old book by Sir Thomas Phillips (See Hale's and Furnivall's ed. of the Percy Folio MSS. II, p. 510). 'When I told' you, in my Last, that the Poem on Guy is *probably Phillips's*, I fancy I meant a Phillips, who, as I think I told you in the same Letter, wrote a Poem in the year 1649, or thereabouts, on Guy. I think now this was my meaning; for when I wrote to you that account of Guy, I copied it from a memorandum in one of my Pocket-books. When I am at Oxford I can settle this matter. In the same Pocket book, I recollect I had likewise entered, *See the Harl. Miscell. for Guy*. The Pocket-book is at Oxford.' Winchester, Sept. 4, 1762 (same, fol. 11). Later he added, 'I don't think *Guy & Amarant* any Part of Rowland's Poem,' but examination showed that Percy's 'stanzas of *Guy and Amarant* [were] *literally* taken from Rowlands's said poem.' Trin. Coll. Oxon. Nov. 5 and 12, 1762 (same, fols. 14, and 15).

¹⁸For example, *King Ryence's Challenge*, which was not in the folio, having been referred to in the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* as a ballad found in *Morte Arthur* (ed. cit. I, p. 36), Warton was called upon to supply a copy of it, and sent the following information, most of which appears in Percy's notes (*Reliques*, ed. Wheatley, London, 1891, III, p. 24 ff.). 'You will find the ballad, of which I quote a Piece, in *P. Enderbury's* [Enderbie] *Cambria Triumphans*. pag. 197. It is not in my edition of *Morte Arthur*, which evidently is the same as your's. I presume it is in the older Editions, from whence the author quoted by

trying by every means to encourage the completion of an undertaking¹⁹ so important for the 'revival of the study of antient English Literature.'

Warton, who probably was ignorant of the liberties Percy was taking with the manuscript in his possession, made no objection to the introduction of modern imitations of old poems based upon old stories.

me, pag. 21, probably took it. . . . Enderbury [ut supra] was lent me by a clergyman in Hants; whither I am going in a few Days for the long vacation; & will from thence send you the Song.' Trin. Coll. Oxon. Jul. 11, 1761 (same, fol. 4). 'I have collated the Ballad in Enderbie with the MSS. inserted in the Bodleian *Morte Arthur*, & with the printed copy of it in the *Letter* describing Q. Elizabeth's *Entertainment at Kenilworth*; & here send you the various Readings in *Both*. From the Title to the MSS Copy, it is plain that this Ballad is not very old. I should judge, with you, that the *story* only was taken from M. Arthur, was it not for the passage, immediately following, in the *Letter*. By which one would suspect, that it was printed in some editions of M. Arthur. At least we may conclude from *thence*, that it was not occasionally composed for the Kenilworth festivities. My mistake in quoting it as a ballad in M. Arthur, arose from my finding it written into the Bodleian copy, in the place, as I imagined, of a Leaf torn out: for there are no pages in that Edition. This supposition was strengthened by the mention of this ballad in the *Letter*.' Trin. Coll. Oxon. Nov. 23, 1761 (same, fol. 6). 'I find a copy of *K. Ryence's Challenge* in an old Miscellany of time of Charles I. But as you have given so correct a copy of this piece, it will be of no service, unless you chuse to mention it in your Preface.' London, Jan. 1, 1763 (same, fol. 20). Percy, however, paid no heed to Warton's last suggestion and says that the ballad was composed for the festivities at Kenilworth (*Reliques*, ed. cit. III, p. 24).

Two other additional poems, not found in the folio, in the preparation of which Warton had a share are *King Cophetua & the Beggar Maid* and *King Edward & the Tanner of Tamworth*. With reference to a copy of the first, Warton wrote: '*The King & the Beggar* which you send me (which I see is from the little 12mo Collection of Songs in 3 vols) is quite different from Johnson's in the *Crowne Garland*. The Bodleyan is shut up on account of its annual visitation. It will be open on Tuesday, when I will begin the transcript.' And then he corrected himself in the same letter, 'I think, & am pretty sure, that your initial Stanza of the *King & Beggar* in your letter, is the same as Johnson's in the *Crowne-Garland*. But this I shall ascertain when the Library is opened,' and later he sent the transcript of it from that collection. Nov. 5 and 12, 1762 (fols. 14 and 15). See also *Reliques*.

After promising a transcript of the ballad, Warton wrote, 'On Examination, the *King & the Tanner* appears to be imperfect by the last Line *only*, which was carelessly pared off in the Bind [ery. It (MS. torn)] is mentioned somewhere, I cannot recollect exactly where, by Hea[rn]'. Nov. 12, 1762. An extract from Hearn's *Account of Some Antiquities in & about Oxford* was sent in a letter of Jan. 9, 1763, but it pertained to Heywood's play, *The first & second parts of King Edward the Fourth, containing the Tanner of Tamworth*, etc, 1613 and not *The*

He said of Percy's *Valentine and Ursine*, a poem suggested by *The Emperour & the Childe* in the original manuscript, which Percy rejected on the pretense that it was 'in a wretched corrupt state, unworthy the press':²⁰ The 'Story is fine & to me perfectly new, as it is many years since I read the old History of *Valentine and Orson*, on which I presume it is partly founded.'²¹ *The Birth of St. George*, admittedly taken from the *Seven Champions of Christendom* and 'for the most part modern', won from him the praise of being 'most poetically handled.'²² And before the completion of the work he explicitly approved the inclusion of specimens of rare poems of later date than the ballads: 'I perceive, by the proofs, that you give specimens of our elder Poets. This is a good Improvement of the Scheme.'²³ For this purpose he sent Gascoigne's *Ode on Ladie Bridges*,²⁴ offered a transcript of *The King's Quair*,²⁵ and traced 'the pretty pastoral song of *Phillida & Corydon*' to

Merric, pleasant, & delectable historie betweene K. Edward IV & a Tanner of Tamworth, etc. 1596 (also in the Bodleian), from which Warton's transcript was no doubt taken. (fol. 20).

Warton's familiarity with the early poetry enabled him to send a note on the reference to Robin Hood in *Piers Plowman*, "'But I can rimes of Robin Hod, and Randall of Chester'", Fol xxvi b. Crowley's edit. 1550', Mar. 31, 1764 (fol. 26).

¹⁹Upon receipt of at least a partial copy of the ballads Warton wrote to Percy, 'The old Ballads are extremely curious, & I heartily wish you success in your intended publication,' (Jun. 19, 1761, fol. 2), and the following year to some notes on various poems he added, 'How goes on the Collection of ancient Ballads? I hope we shall have it in the winter.' Winchester, Sept. 4, 1762 (fol. 11).

When the timid Percy sought the approval of 'men of learning and character' to 'serve as an amulet to guard him from every unfavourable censure, for having bestowed any attention on a parcel of old ballads', Warton was glad to lend his name. 'My name will receive honour in being mentioned before your elegant Work.' Winchester, Jul. 30, 1764 (fol. 27). Six months later he inquired about its progress: 'I hope your Ballads are near Publication.' Dec. 5, 1764 (fol. 29).

²⁰*Reliques*, ed. cit. III, p. 265.

²¹Oxon. Nov. 21, 1762, Harvard MSS., fol. 16.

²²Oxford, Trin. Coll. Octob. 20, 1762, same MSS., fol. 12.

²³Winchester, Jul. 30, 1764, fol. 27.

²⁴It was promised in the letter of Sept. 4, 1762 (fol. 11), and in that of Nov. 21, he added the comment, 'I think you will like the little *ode of Gascoigne*.'

²⁵After a vain search for the 'Ballad of James I of Scotland' (fol. 15) for which Percy had given inaccurate references, Warton 'discovered the Poem of James I of Scotland, where you direct me in your last. It consists of near 100 pages in folio, closely written. It is a vision in long verse, in stanzas of seven Lines. Shall you want a Transcript?' (Nov. 21, 1762, fol. 16). Percy rejected this poem, however, and printed instead some shorter verses of questionable authenticity. *Reliques*, ed. cit. II, p. 300.

England's Helicon and 'the *Muses Library*, 1738'.²⁶

Percy was unsuccessful, however, in an effort to tempt Warton to contribute to the collection a poem of his own in the old style, although he entreated for a continuation of the *Squire's Tale*, in the conclusion of which he knew Warton was interested,²⁷ and he appealed to Warton's often expressed desire to improve English poetry by a revival of its former imaginative power.²⁸ In reply to Percy's flattering request, Warton admitted the attractiveness of the subject, but made no promise. 'I thank you for thinking me qualified to complete Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*,' he wrote. 'The Subject is so much in my own way, that I do assure you I should like to try my hand at it. You are certainly right in thinking that the Public ought to have their attention called to Poetry in new forms; to Poetry endued with new manners & new Images.'²⁹

On receipt of a presentation copy³⁰ of the finished work, Warton wrote enthusiastically to the editor:

After an excursion longer than usual, I returned to Oxford only last Night; otherwise I should have long since acknowledged the favour of your very valuable and agreeable Present. I think you have opened a new field of Poetry, and supplied many new and curious Materials for the history and Illustration of ancient English Literature. I have lately had a Letter from Mr. Walpole, who speaks in very high terms of your Publication. At Oxford it is a favourite Work; and, I doubt not, but it is equally popular in Town. I hope you are going on in the same Walk. I shall be happy to receive your future Commands.³¹ Two months later he was urging a second edition: 'I trust, the Taste

²⁶Nov. 12, 1762, fol. 15.

²⁷See *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, ed. cit. I, p. 211.

²⁸In a postscript to a letter of August 26, 1762, requesting various transcripts for 'our *Ancient Songs & Ballads*,' Percy wrote, 'Tho' I have trespassed on your patience so monstrously already, I cannot prevail on myself to close up the packet without mentioning a wish, which had long been uppermost in my heart: it is—that you would undertake to complete Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*. It would be a task worthy of your genius, and such as it is every way (I am persuaded) equal to. From some hints in your book, vol. I, p. 153, I conclude that *your Imagination has before now amused itself in inventing expedients to bring those promised adventures to an issue*. That pleasing cast of antiquity, which distinguished those beautiful poems of yours, in ye late Collections of Oxford Verses, & which gave them so great an advantage over all others, would be finely adapted to such an undertaking. And let me add, nothing would fix your fame upon a more solid basis, or be more likely to captivate the attention of the public, which seems to loath all the common forms of Poetry; & requires some new species to quicken its pall'd appetite.' Harv. MSS. fols. 10 and 10^a.

²⁹Winchester, Sept. 4, 1762, fol. 11.

³⁰Which was among the books catalogued for sale by Payne in 1801.

³¹Trin. Coll. Oxon., Apr. 29, 1765, Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. no. 32329, fol. 28.

of the Public will call for a second Edition of your Ballads. Any Improvement that shall occur to me, I will gladly communicate.³²

At the same time that Percy was preparing his edition of the ballads, he evidently contemplated an edition of Spanish romances as an illustration to *Don Quixote*, but whether in conjunction with the *Reliques* or as a separate work, I cannot determine. At any rate Warton was informed of the project and wrote approvingly: 'I rejoyce at your collection of the Romances referred to in *Don Quixote*. It will be a most valuable & a most proper Illustration. Your Translation of the Metrical Pieces of Romances I hope you will likewise continue; and I thank you for your admirable specimen.'³³ As soon as he learned of this project he sent Percy a rare and valuable edition of Sepúlveda's *Cancionero de Romances*³⁴ and lamented that in the dispersal of Collins' library another valuable book, *El Vendarero Luego* [?],³⁵ had been lost. The most interesting point about Warton's connection with this project is the evidence it gives of his first-hand acquaintance with the Spanish language and with at least a small portion of its literature.

Warton was immediately informed of Percy's next project, of publishing *The Household Book of the Earl of Northumberland in 1512 at his Castles of Wressle and Leconfield in Yorkshire*,³⁶ which was undertaken at the request of his patron, the Duke of Northumberland; and he at once appreciated its value and encouraged the plan. 'Your

³²Oxon. Jun. 15, 1765, Harv. MSS. fol. 30. Two other letters contain similar solicitations about the second edition, that of Nov. 29, 1766 (fol. 28), quoted above, and Apr. 21, 1767, 'When does the new Edition of the Ballads appear?' (fol. 32).

³³Sept. 4, 1762, fol. 11.

³⁴'"Cancionero de Romances sacados de las coronicas de España con otros. compuestos por Lorenzo de Sepulveda. En Sevilla, 1584, 12mo." It is in the short Romance metre. It contains detached stories of the Feats of several Spanish Leaders &c. Among the rest, of the Cid, on whom Corneille formed his famous tragedy. If you have it not, I will find some method of conveying it to you after my Return to Oxford.' (*Ibid.*) Four years later he presented the *Cancionero* to Percy. (Fol. 28).

The rarity of this edition is attested by the fact that a recent bibliographer doubts its existence, but without sufficient cause. He says of it, 'Encuentro citada esta edición en la *Historia de la Literatura española* de Ticknor (I, 39, 4) No he logrado confirmar esta cita, que no se encuentra en ningun bibliógrafo . . . que tengo al menos por dudosa.' See Escudero y Perosso: *Tipografía Hispalense*, Madrid, 1894, art. 739.

³⁵Warton says of this, 'I remember my friend Collins used to look upon "*El Vendarero &c*" as the most curious & valuable book in his Collection. I think it was a thick quarto, in the short measure' (fol. 11a). I am unable to find any work of similar title in any Spanish bibliography.

³⁶Published in 1768.

Pacquett has given me high Entertainment', he wrote. 'It will be a most curious and valuable Publication. If you prefix a Preface, it will be worth while to introduce Leland's Description of the Castle of Wress-hill, which seems to have struck him in a particular manner; and which he describes more minutely and at length, than almost any thing else in his whole Itinerary. See Itin. Vol. 1. fol. 59, 60. I think I saw in Pembroke-Hall Library, at Cambridge, a copy of your manuscript. At least it was a Book of the same Kind. It was last summer; and Mr. Gray was consulting it, I suppose, for anecdotes of ancient Manners, so amusing to the Imagination. . . . You may depend on the utmost secrecy.'³⁷ Warton probably made no real contributions to it, for he wrote the next year on receipt of the proof of the volume, 'Your Book never reached me in the Country (by means of the Carelessness of Bedmakers) till I had been a long while from Oxford, & at a time when I was full of Engagements, so as not to be able to sit down with a Pen in my Hand. I am now returned to Oxford, & fear it will be now too late for any Notes that may occur. Give me a Line on this Head.'³⁸

It was during this period that Warton's friendship with Dr. Johnson was at its height. Their friendship seems to have begun when the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* commanded the admiration of the great classical critic in spite of the reactionary character of its critical tenets. During the summer following their appearance, Johnson paid his first visit to Oxford since he had left the university more than twenty years before. He lodged on this visit at Kettel-Hall adjoining Trinity College, and Warton acted as his cicerone. He showed him the libraries—which Johnson had ostensibly come to Oxford to consult³⁹—and the doctor preferred the old Gothic hall at Trinity to the more commodious modern libraries, saying, 'Sir, if a man has a mind to *prance*, he must study at Christ-Church and All-Souls.'⁴⁰ Together they took long walks into the country about Oxford, viewed some of the ruins in the vicinity—the abbies of Osney and Rewley—discussed Warton's favourite hobby, Gothic architecture, and agreed in their indignation at the havoc wrought by the reformation. They frequently visited Francis Wise, the Radclivian librarian, at Ellsfield, where Johnson busied himself with their host's library of 'books in Northern Literature,' and Wise read them his *History and Chronology of the fabulous Ages* which he was preparing to print.⁴¹ Both Warton and Wise were interested

³⁷Trin. Coll. Oxon. Jul. 25, 1767, Harv. MSS., fol. 33.

³⁸Oxon. Oct. 24, 1768, same, fol. 34.

³⁹Warton says that he collected nothing in the libraries for his dictionary although he stayed at Oxford five weeks. Boswell's *Johnson*, I, p. 270 and note.

⁴⁰*Ibid.* II, pp. 67-8, note.

⁴¹See Warton's account of this visit, *ibid.* I, p. 271, ff.

in getting the degree of Master of Arts bestowed upon Johnson that it might appear on the title page of the dictionary and be as great an honour to Oxford as to Johnson.⁴² Although the lexicographer came to Oxford at the beginning of the long vacation, he was so charmed with his visit and his host that he vowed if he came to live at Oxford, he would take up his abode at Trinity.⁴³ Besides mutual interest there was also a warm personal feeling between the two men; Johnson valued highly and eagerly sought the friendship of the younger man. Toward the close of the year, in one of his occasional fits of melancholy, intensified by a reminder of the loss of his wife, he wrote to Warton, 'I would endeavour, by the help of you and your brother, to supply the want of closer union, by friendship.'⁴⁴

Warton, however, although ready enough to serve Johnson in his work, was a negligent correspondent, and a busy, if not a somewhat offish, friend, and Johnson's letters are full of reproaches and complaints of his neglect: 'But why does my dear Mr. Warton tell me nothing of himself?'⁴⁵ 'Dear Mr. Warton, let me hear from you, and tell me something, I care not what, so I hear it but from you. . . I have a great mind to come to Oxford at Easter; but you will not invite me.'⁴⁶ 'You might write to me now and then, if you were good for any thing. But *honores mutant mores*. Professors forget their friends.'⁴⁷ Notwithstanding the less frequent correspondence, their literary friendship continued; Warton contributed three numbers to Johnson's *Idler* in 1758⁴⁸ and then and later collected notes for his edition of Shakespeare,⁴⁹ while Johnson planned to interest Warton in extensive schemes for antiquarian work which was beyond his own power to execute.⁵⁰ Their relations were very cordial in 1764 when Johnson again visited Oxford, and promised a longer visit 'after Xmas, when Shakespeare is completed,'⁵¹—a visit

⁴²Wooll, *Op. cit.* p. 228.

⁴³Boswell's *Johnson*, I, p. 272.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* I, p. 277.

⁴⁵Feb. 4, 1755, Boswell's *Johnson*, I, p. 279.

⁴⁶Mar. 20, 1755. *Ibid.* I, p. 283.

⁴⁷June 21, 1757. *Ibid.* I, p. 322.

⁴⁸Numbers 33, 93, and 96.

⁴⁹April 14, 1758, June 1, 1758, and June 23, 1770, Boswell's *Johnson*, I, pp. 335-6, 337, and II, pp. 114-5.

⁵⁰Oct. 27, 1757. This letter was probably never sent to Warton. Johnson's *Letters*, ed. Hill, I, pp. 73-4 and note.

⁵¹Warton to Percy, Dec. 5, 1764. 'We have had the Pleasure of Sam Johnson's company at Oxford, and I find he intends spending a long time with us after Xmas, when Shakespeare is completed.' (Harv. MSS. fol. 29.) Boswell has no mention of this visit to Oxford, nor have his editors noticed this letter.

which was no doubt deferred when the expected work was not ready till October. The friends probably met, however, at Winchester, for Dr. Johnson visited Dr. Warton there during the summer of 1765.⁵² When Johnson visited Oxford in 1769, he was exceedingly busy and far from well but eager to visit with Warton,⁵³ and in 1776 when he and Boswell together returned to Oxford, they spent an evening with Warton at Trinity.⁵⁴

At this time, however, and always, Warton's principal devotion was given to his university, and he refused none of her demands. On the occasions of public celebrations Warton seems to have been called upon frequently to play a worthy part. For the Encænna of 1751 he contributed an *Ode for Music*, which was performed at the Sheldonian Theatre. He was very busy with the *Oxford Collection on the Royal Nuptials* in 1761,⁵⁵ to which he contributed some verses *To her Majesty*,⁵⁶ and he superintended the collection on the birth of the Prince of Wales⁵⁷ the next year, to which he likewise contributed a poem.⁵⁸ At the time of the great Encænna in honour of peace in 1763, he was extremely busy.⁵⁹ The celebration lasted several days with eight speakers a day and formal dinners in honour of the distinguished guests at the various halls. In addition to preparing his own speech for the occasion, Warton, as major domo, had charge of the details,—‘the trouble I have had in preparation is infinite,’ he wrote his brother, ‘but hope all will be repaid if it goes off well, as I doubt not.’⁶⁰

Shortly after the *Observations* appeared, Warton entered with characteristic loyalty to his college into the preparation of a life of its

⁵²Wooll, *Op. cit.* p. 309.

⁵³May 31, 1769, Boswell's *Johnson*, II, p. 68 and note.

⁵⁴*Ibid.* II, p. 446.

⁵⁵Letter to Percy, Nov. 23, 1761, Harv. MSS. fol. 6a.

⁵⁶*On the Marriage of the King. To her Majesty.* See *Works*, ed. cit. I, p. 38.

⁵⁷‘I am much obliged to you for your good opinion of my poetical talents. Such as they are, they are at present employed on the Birth of the Prince; but this is nothing to the trouble and labour I have in overlooking & forming the whole collection.’ Octob. 20, 1762, Harv. MSS. fol. 12.

⁵⁸*On the Birth of the Prince of Wales*, (written after the Installation at Windsor, in the same year, 1762); see *Works*, I, p. 46.

⁵⁹He was also engaged with the Encænna of the preceding summer, when ‘the hurry of our Encænna at Oxford,’ was one of his excuses for delay in answering a letter to Percy. London, Dec. 22, 1763, Harv. MSS. fol. 23.

⁶⁰Wooll, *Op. cit.* p. 293. A good-natured but not very brilliant satire in imitation of earlier *Terra-Fillii*, published during the Encænna, was popularly ascribed to Warton (see *Lit. Anec.* VIII, 237), but it is probable that Warton, if he was connected with it at all, simply aided his friend Coleman, the real editor. See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* art. Coleman.

founder, Sir Thomas Pope, for the *Biographia Britannica*.⁶¹ A second antiquarian labour of love for the college was the life of Ralph Bathurst, one of the presidents of Trinity, prefixed to a selection from his works, published in 1761.⁶² Both of these biographies were compiled from manuscript materials, and were enlivened, especially the first, with digressions upon contemporary history. In 1772 Warton published separately an enlarged edition of his Life of Sir Thomas Pope,⁶³ and in 1780 another edition with further additions.⁶⁴

The value of the life of Pope as an important source of information for the period which it covers, because of the fresh manuscript material which was added to the successive editions, has now been seriously impugned by the discovery that some of the documents upon which it is based are fabrications. President Blakiston has shown⁶⁵ that quotations from *MSS. Cotton, Vitellius, F. 5*, that is, to Machyn's *Diary*, to which Warton says he gave a 'cursory Inspection'⁶⁶—sufficient to show him that some of the leaves had been burned but not that the manuscript was so nearly intact that no considerable sections could have been lost from it—and the few quotations from alleged transcripts from Machyn's *Diary* made by the annalist John Strype, are inaccurate. He has also proved that the transcriptions alleged to have been made by Francis Wise from copies of Machyn made by Strype before the fire and sent to Dr. Charlett, (designated by Warton as *MSS. Cotton, Vitellius, F. 5 MSS. Strype*), and from other manuscripts in Charlett's collections and from the family papers of Sir Henry Pope-Blount (designated as *MSS. F. Wise*) were made from no extant manuscripts, are corroborated by no

⁶¹*Or the Lives of the Most Eminent Persons who flourished in Great Britain and Ireland from the earliest Ages down to the present time*, etc. 1747-66. John Campbell, the largest contributor, to whom Warton sent his life of Pope, replied, 'I see, Sir, you have taken a great deal of pains in that life, of which, I will take all the care imaginable. . . . If you can think of any life that will be acceptable to yourself, or grateful to the University, I shall take care and hand it to the press with much satisfaction.' See Wooll, *Op. cit.* p. 241. Warton submitted a life of Weever, the antiquary, but it does not appear in the *Biographia*. *Ibid.* p. 263.

⁶²*The Life and Literary Remains of Ralph Bathurst, M.D. . . President of Trinity College in Oxford*. . . . London, 1761.

⁶³*The Life of Sir Thomas Pope, Founder of Trinity College, Oxford. Chiefly compiled from Original Evidences. With an appendix of Papers never before printed*. London, 1772. Percy gave slight assistance by examining the will of Sir Thomas Audley in the Prerogative office, London. Warton's letters to Percy, Feb. 26 and April 21, 1767, Harvard MSS. fols. 31 and 32.

⁶⁴*The Second Edition, corrected and enlarged*. . . London, 1780.

⁶⁵H. E. D. Blakiston: *Thomas Warton and Machyn's Diary*, *English Historical Review*. XI, pp. 282-300.

⁶⁶*Life of Pope*, Preface, ed. 1780, p. xii.

other authorities, and are demonstrably false and misleading in some pretended facts. But Dr. Blakiston was not content with thus explaining the fabrications; he attempted to fix the blame for them upon Warton, and, as it seems to me, without sufficient justification. All of the positive facts of the case can be as easily explained upon the theory that the biographer himself was the victim of a clever but unscrupulous antiquary as upon the supposition that Warton was himself guilty of the fraud, for it is well known that he was habitually assisted by other antiquarians and friends whose contributions he accepted without verification. Dr. Blakiston, however, seems to think that when he can exonerate Wise by showing that the fabrications were added to the separate editions both published after his death, Warton is thereby proved guilty; the possibility of a third person being involved has not been given by him the consideration it deserves.

Most of Dr. Blakiston's reasons for fixing upon Warton are easily disposed of. That Warton's failure to detect the fabrications when they were offered him proves his guilt, is reasoning which almost equally convicts every author who has accepted these statements in Warton's history. That what Dr. Blakiston supposes the only extant material for the life of Pope among Warton's voluminous papers—a small note book—contains no reference to the disputed passages,⁶⁷ of course proves nothing. That the fabrications appeared gradually is, as Dr. Blakiston says, 'highly suspicious', but does not indicate whom one is to suspect. Two of his reasons⁶⁸ are more soundly based upon Warton's known faults of occasional inaccuracy of statement or quotation in some details of his extensive works. These faults would be more reprehensible even in an eighteenth century antiquary were it possible for his critics—from Ritson to Blakiston⁶⁹—to free themselves from it,—and they show how easy a victim he would become of a malicious practical joker.

Moreover, in the absence of conclusive evidence for so grave a charge, great weight must be given to the character of the accused. It must be shown that such a deception is quite in keeping with his character, that it is not only possible but probable that he was guilty of the forgery attributed to him. And such evidence is altogether wanting

⁶⁷Another book of notes upon the life of Pope, at Winchester College, likewise does not refer to the fabrications.

⁶⁸That he exaggerated the damage to the Machyn manuscript and printed fabrications of letters supposed to be in Trinity College Library. To the latter of course Warton had easy access, and he entirely personally consulted them; but it is nevertheless possible that transcripts were made by another and less veracious hand.

⁶⁹For example the first separate edition of the life of Pope was published in 1772, not 1770, as he says. His most serious blunder is discussed later.

in this case. It is a striking coincidence that Dr. Blakiston has selected as a principal reason for accusing Warton, as an alleged motive or suggestion for the deception, a circumstance that, on the contrary, furnishes a conspicuous proof of his honesty: namely, his connection with the Rowley-Chatterton forgeries. Warton, he says, 'was himself engaged about 1778, when he must have put the finishing touches to [some of the Pope fabrications], in defending the authenticity of the Rowley poems,' and he further suggests that Warton was tempted to make a similar experiment, in which, from his knowledge of early English literature, he was more likely to succeed than Wise, a 'mere antiquarian'.⁷⁰ As a matter of fact, in 1778, as well as in 1772 and 1782, Warton was engaged, not in defending the authenticity of the poems, but in rejecting them as spurious. Moreover his thoroughly honest conclusion in this matter is the more commendable and significant in this connection because it not only was reached in opposition to popular opinion, but was unwelcome to himself. In spite of his own inclination to credit Chatterton's tale, Warton was the first scholar who ventured to put himself on record as denying the authenticity of the poems. His openminded and scholarly treatment of the facts in this matter, in which some deference to personal bias might have been excused, seems to make improbable to the point of impossibility any deliberate tampering with facts in an historical treatise. When he gives such conspicuous evidence of openmindedness and candour in the treatment of this question, it is scarcely credible that he could be at the same time engaged in forging so gratuitous and useless a deception as the Strye forgeries.

From the time that Warton had taken his first degree in 1747, he had been a tutor in Trinity College, of which he became a fellow four years later, and he served his university as faithfully in this capacity as in more prominent ones. Although he did a remarkably large amount of literary and antiquarian work, he regarded himself rather as an Oxford don than as a man of letters. Although no one probably made better use of his academic leisure, he always put his collegiate duties first: the work upon Spenser was neglected and finally abandoned while

⁷⁰p. 299. Dr. Blakiston's source for this mistake is the *Dictionary of National Biography* article on Chatterton. It is unfortunate that in an attack on the accuracy of another historian he did not verify and thereby correct that very misleading mention of Warton's connection with the controversy by reference to the original documents, the second volume of the *History of English Poetry*, 1778, (pp. 139-164, and Emendations to p. 164) and Warton's *Enquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems attributed to Rowley*, 1782, in which he reviews his connection with it, pp. 1-6.

he devoted himself to his pupils;⁷¹ and at the special request of Lord North, who had been his contemporary at Trinity, he took his son under his special charge from 1774 to 1777, relinquishing his other pupils during that time,⁷² and neglecting somewhat his work upon the history of poetry. As a tutor he was at least popular, forming lasting and beneficial friendships with some of his pupils, with Topham Beauclerk and Bennet Langton, who came up to Oxford soon after the interruption of the Spenserian design, and with William Lisle Bowles, who had known Warton at Winchester and selected Trinity on his account, and upon whose poetry Warton exercised some influence.

As a professor Warton was more active in his earlier than in his later years. Lord Eldon, who was a member of University College from 1766 to 1773, says that 'poor Tom Warton' used to send to his pupils at the beginning of every term 'to know whether they would *wish* to attend lecture that term,'⁷³ but Mant lamented that in his later years when he was professor of history, he 'suffered the "rostrum to grow cold"'.⁷⁴ However, his strongest claim to the regius professorship of modern history was that he was willing to deliver the lectures which George III was aroused to demand while his rival wished to hold the appointment as a sinecure.

In 1757 Warton was elected by his university to succeed William Hawkins of Pembroke in the office which his father had formerly held, the professorship of poetry, and he was reelected at the expiration of his first term of office in 1762. As poetry professor Warton devoted his lectures chiefly to recommending and expounding the beauties of classical poetry. One of these lectures, a Latin discourse on Greek pastoral poetry, was afterwards enlarged to serve as a prefatory discourse to his edition of Theocritus.⁷⁵ The Latin translations from Greek poems which were included in the last edition of his poetry were made and first used as illustrations of his subject in this course of lectures.⁷⁵ The most substantial outgrowth of his studies as poetry professor, however, was his editions of classical poetry. The first was a small edition of *Inscriptionum Romanarum Metricarum Delectus*,⁷⁶ a selection of inscriptions,

⁷¹*Supra*. A letter from his brother shows that he abandoned an important business trip to London with his brother during the long vacation in 1754 because of his duty to a pupil. See Wooll, p. 233, where the letter is misdated 1755. Joseph's removal to Tunworth, alluded to in the letter as imminent, was made in 1754.

⁷²Mant, *Op. cit.* pp. lxxiv-lxxv.

⁷³Boswell's *Johnson*, I, p. 279, note.

⁷⁴Mant, *Op. cit.* p. lxxxiv.

⁷⁵*Ibid.* p. xli.

⁷⁶1758.

chiefly sepulchral, from various other collections, and including a few modern epigrams, one by Dr. Jortin and five of his own on the classical model.⁷⁷ This edition, which, with characteristic indifference to fame, was published anonymously, was quite small and had so slight a popularity that twenty years after its publication it was almost unknown, and had become so rare that the author himself wanted a copy of it.⁷⁸

Contemporary opinion varied as to its merits. Shenstone called it 'rather too simple, even for my taste.'⁷⁹ George Coleman was more enthusiastic and wrote to the author, 'You know, I suppose, that the *Inscriptiones Romanae*, &c. are *your's*. They have, I find, been sent to all the literati, Dr. Markham, Bedingfield, Garriek, &c. They are very well spoken of; Markham in particular commended them much, and master Francklin is held mighty cheap for his very unclassical review of them.'⁸⁰ James Harris was no doubt referring to the same work when he wrote, 'Be pleas'd to accept my sincerest wishes for your truly laudable endeavours towards the revival, the preservation, and the encrease of good taste; not that phantom bearing its name, imported by Petit Maitres from France, but that real and animating form which guided the geniuses at Athens.'⁸¹ A similar work was a collection of Greek inscriptions, an edition of Cephala's *Anthology*.⁸²

The great work of Warton's professorship was, however, the edition of Theocritus on which he was engaged at the time the *Inscriptionum* was published,⁸³ and for which he laid aside all other literary work,⁸⁴

⁷⁷Mant, p. xlii. The Latin epigrams are included in Mant's edition of Warton's poems, volume II.

⁷⁸See *Lit. Anec.*, VIII, p. 476 and III, p. 427.

⁷⁹Shenstone's *Works*, ed. 1777, III, p. 284.

⁸⁰Wooll, *Op. cit.* p. 258.

⁸¹*Ibid.* pp. 260-1.

⁸²1766.

⁸³Cowper to Gough, Nov. 26, 1758. 'You have heard (no doubt) that the Republic of Letters is in great expectation of a good edition of Theocritus from Mr. Warton, the Poetry Professor. His plan is, to give us a correct text, with critical and explanatory notes.' *Lit. Anec.* VIII, p. 562. In the preface to the *Anthology* the *Theocritus* was definitely promised, p. xxxvi. See also Wooll, p. 267.

⁸⁴Nov. 29, 1766 Warton wrote to Percy, 'The History of English Poetry is at present laid aside for the Publication of Theocritus, which is nearly finished;' (Harv. MSS. fol. 28) two years later the *Theocritus* was still occupying him although he was eager to be at the History. 'My Theocritus,' he wrote Oct. 24 1768, 'will soon be published; and when I am released [?] from that work, I hope to be able to make another Excursion into Fairy-Land.' Same MSS. fol. 34.

but which did not appear until 1770.⁸⁵ The fact that Theocritus had long been a favourite author with Warton⁸⁶ no doubt influenced the selection of that author, but the immediate cause was very likely the large collection of manuscripts which John St. Amand, a classical antiquary, had collected in Italy and elsewhere for a proposed edition of Theocritus and which he bequeathed to the Bodleian Library.⁸⁷ Warton also received assistance in the publication of *Theocritus* from Jonathan Toup, whom Warburton called the 'first Greek scholar in Europe'.⁸⁸ His principal contribution was an epistle on some of the Idyllia,⁸⁹ but he also sent a number of briefer notes.⁹⁰ Warton repaid Toup's kindness not only by contributions to the edition of Longinus which Toup was even at that time engaged upon,⁹¹ but by seeing it through the press.⁹² The edition of Theocritus was very highly praised

⁸⁵The editor confidently expected it two years earlier. See letter to Jonathan Toup, May 2, 1768. 'We are now printing the Notes of the XVth Idyllium; and as no sort of Interruption will intervene, the Work will be ready for Publication by or before Christmas next.' Bodleian Library, MSS. Clar. Pr. C. 13, f. 109.

⁸⁶Mant, p. xliv, and preface to Theocritus.

⁸⁷Mant, p. xliv. St. Amand died in 1754.

⁸⁸*Dict. Nat. Biog.* article Toup.

⁸⁹Printed at the end of Warton's notes.

⁹⁰Printed with Warton's.

Dear Sir

I have received the Note, which is very curious and ingenious. If you please, as we are not yet got to the *Dioscuri*, I will insert it in its proper place, with due Acknowledgement as coming from you; as I have all along done with those *detached* Notes you have sent me, not belonging to the Epistola.

I shall be extremely glad to hear from you as often as possible, & am, Dear Sir,
With great Truth, yrs. very sincerely,

T. Warton.

Oxon. Mar. 30, 1768.

Bodleian Library, MSS. Clar. Pr. C. 14, fol. 162.

⁹¹ 'The World is in great Expectation of your Longinus; & I should be glad if you could inform me, when we are likely to be favoured with so valuable an accession to Grecian Literature.' May 2, 1768, Clar. Pr. C. 13, f. 109.

⁹²No slight service, if we may judge from the following letter.

Dear Sir

In placing Rhinhinius's Notes *first*, we have acted according to your own Directions in a Letter which I inclose. If you mean to alter your first Design specified in this Letter, and to place your *own* Notes after the Text, two or three Sheets, (now worked off) must be cancelled. I have stopped the Press till I hear from you on this Particular. The Cancelling will be attended with some little Expence & Delay; but if you chose to have it done, I will propose it to the Board. I am, Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate

humble servt.

Trin. Coll. Feb. 4, 1777.

P.S. Please to return the Inclosed.

T. Warton.

Clar. Pr. 13, fol. 83. See also Wooll, pp. 318, 319, 364, and 377.

by Warton's friends upon its publication; Toup called it 'the best publication that ever came from the Clarendon Press';⁹³ but foreign scholars immediately discovered its defects in precision, and it has now been entirely superseded.⁹⁴

Almost immediately upon the expiration of his second term as professor of poetry, Warton began making attempts to secure the Professorship of Modern History, and Bishop Warburton was particularly active in his behalf. Before Warton's name was proposed,⁹⁵ however, the office had been awarded to Mr. Vivian, upon his agreeing to comply with the King's demand that it should no longer be held as a sinecure. A little more than a year later Vivian was very ill; the false rumour of his death revived the hopes of Warton's friends, and fresh efforts were made. The uncertainty as to whether or not Vivian would give up his pretensions to the office⁹⁶ and refuse to read lectures in conformity with the King's condition,⁹⁷ kept them in a continual excitement, in which Warton seems to have shared least of all. When finally the professorship was again settled upon Vivian, Warburton wrote in commendation of the manner in which he accepted the disappointment, at the same time assuring him that Vivian's health was sure to create a vacancy in the office soon.⁹⁸ Warton's delicacy, or indolence, was, however, greater than the Bishop of Gloucester's, and he delayed until Vivian was actually dead before approaching Grafton and North for his office. This, in the opinion of Warburton at least, cost him the office,⁹⁹ which went to

⁹³Mant, p. xliii.

⁹⁴*Dict. Nat. Biog.* Article Warton.

⁹⁵Wooll, *Op. cit.* pp. 337-8.

⁹⁶*Ibid.* p. 355.

⁹⁷Warburton to T. Warton, Feb. 15, 1770. . . 'It is as clear as the day that Vivian hangs on the professorship, in hopes that these distracted times, and a shifting Ministry, will throw it into his hands, without the burthen. Your only hope now is the steadiness of the K.'s purpose. . . If Vivian will read lectures as required, without doubt he will have the professorship. If he will not read, and declines the condition, and the King insists on the performance, you will have it. If the report of Vivian's death had been true, I had secured it for you.' Wooll, pp. 360-1.

⁹⁸*Ibid.* p. 363.

⁹⁹Warburton to Warton, March 13th, 1771. . . 'I take it for granted you was grown very indifferent to this professorship, or that you would have seen me on Sunday (I was only gone to the Chapel) that I might have wrote immediately to the D. of Grafton, who had actually got the thing for you of the King, in the supposition of the death of Vivian. That report proved false. So our labour was

Thomas Nowell,¹⁰⁰ who retained it until his death in 1801. This is the last university honour which Warton sought. In 1785 he was, however, elected Camden Professor of Ancient History in recognition of his merits and the honours he had conferred upon the university. Warton was not so active in the prosecution of his course in ancient history as he had been in that of poetry thirty years earlier, and he probably never delivered any lectures after his inaugural one.

to begin again. But as I now understand Vivian lay a dying for some time, that was the time when you should have begun your new application. You sat out, in every sense, too late. . . I believe I am more vexed and disappointed than you are: and not a little of my vexation falls upon yourself; or at least, would fall, if I did not think you must needs be very indifferent about the matter. Perhaps, all things considered, you may have good reason for being so.' Wooll, pp. 374-5.

¹⁰⁰Nowell seems to have been upon another occasion the successful applicant for an office sought by Warton. *Ibid.* p. 268.

CHAPTER V

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY. VOLUME I, 1774.

THE TRIUMPH OF ROMANCE.

Before the expiration of his term as professor of poetry, Warton was again at work in the field of English literature, from which his interest had been only partly and temporarily distracted by his classical studies. He now began working seriously upon his *magnum opus*, the *History of English Poetry*. This work had no doubt been more or less definitely projected ever since his studies for the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* had shown him the possibilities of the subject and the large amount of material available for it; he had indeed partly foreshadowed it in a brief résumé of the subject in his first important work.

Two eighteenth century poets before Warton had undertaken to supply the need for a history of English poetry and had abandoned their attempts after doing little more than outline their projects. During the two preceding centuries a number of works dealing more or less directly with the subject had appeared,—discourses on English poetry with some account of the lives of the poets, and collections of lives of the famous men of England including the poets; the small number of such attempts is not so striking as the poor quality of even the best results. What passed in the seventeenth century for a history of poetry was a sort of miscellany or compendium of anecdotes of the lives of poets arranged alphabetically rather than chronologically, without historical perspective and with no critical value. The tradition of Philips, Winstanley and Langbaine was carried on in the eighteenth century by Jacob, Tanner and Cibber, whose 'dictionaries of Poets' differed scarcely at all from the catalogues from which they were copied.

Pope and Gray in their plans for a history of poetry, avoided this error by arranging their subjects into so-called 'schools' of poetry, a procedure of somewhat questionable wisdom in the absence of any chronological history of the subject. It remained for Warton therefore to attempt and to bring to an advanced stage of completion the first orderly history of English poetry, and thereby, in spite of the obvious imperfections of his work, to transform the growing curiosity of the eighteenth century antiquarian into the historical study of the nineteenth century scholar.

As early as 1765 Warton's plan had proceeded so far that he wrote to Percy, 'I think I have told you that I am writing *The History of English Poetry*, which has never yet been done at *large*, and in *form*. My Materials are almost ready.'¹ The following year, however, the work was laid aside for his edition of *Theocritus*² which occupied him longer than he anticipated. His letters to Percy show his eagerness to be at the more congenial work, in which Percy's interest and the success of his *Reliques* helped to encourage him: 'My Theocritus will soon be published; and when I am released [?] from that Work, I hope to be able to make another Excursion into Fairy-Land. My Encouragement is having such a Companion as you in my Rambles there.'³

As soon as it became known among Warton's friends that he was undertaking this important work, they were eager to help with it. Their assistance was graciously accepted and it considerably facilitated the stupendous undertaking. Farmer immediately offered a 'pretty large Spenserian packet' and later asked for a 'job on the History';⁴ Hurd engaged to get Gray's plan for comparison with his own and commended the 'noble design';⁵ Garrick not only eagerly offered the use of his valuable collection of old plays and romances, but even sent them down to Oxford to be used⁶—a favour which Dr. Johnson complained had not been granted him.⁷ Percy, eager to repay Warton's help with the ballads, became a valuable contributor,⁸ especially to the second volume; and Warton's Oxford friends, Priece and Wise, besides many nameless helpers and amanuenses, helped with the compilations.

Warton spent many years collecting the materials for his history, a task incomparably more difficult than it now appears because of the virtual inaccessibility of old books and manuscripts. Manuscripts were

¹Oxon. Jun. 15, 1765, Harv. MSS. fol. 30.

²Nov. 29, 1766, *Ibid.* fol. 28.

³Oct. 24, 1768, *Ibid.* fol. 34.

⁴Letters of Nov. 19, 1766 and Feb. 13, 1770. Wooll, *Op. cit.* pp. 315, 359.

⁵Letter of Sept. 15, 1769. *Ibid.* pp. 348-9.

⁶Letter of June 29, 1769. *Ibid.* p. 346.

⁷*Preface to Shakespeare*, Johnson's *Works*, Lynam ed. V, p. 138.

⁸Warton was careful not to hinder Percy's plans for publication by a previous use of his material, and wrote; 'I shall be much obliged to you if you could send about 40 Lines, transcribed as a specimen, of *Sir Launfall*, written by Chester, temp. Hen. vi. Perhaps you intend that piece for publication: but such a Specimen would advertise your design; & I would mention your intention, with due acknowledgement & recommendation. But if this breaks in upon any scheme of your's, I don't ask it.' (Winchester, Sept. 28, 1769, Harv. MSS. fol. 36). Permission to publish was given, and Warton printed 42 lines from the beginning and 6 from the conclusion, with acknowledgement to Percy, in the second volume of his history, p 102, note.

widely scattered through cathedral and college libraries, private and public collections, the Bodleian Library and the then recently founded British Museum; moreover all such collections were very poorly catalogued, so that finding a wanted book or manuscript frequently meant actually ransacking a whole collection, and so little order prevailed among them that Warton complained that he was unable to find again a book that he had once consulted.⁹ Warton had the added difficulty as a pioneer that he had no training, little experience, and few examples in the use of manuscripts; he was unskilled in old hands, and had no exact knowledge of the early forms of the language. His tremendous energy and boundless enthusiasm for the task, however, enabled him to overcome these difficulties pretty successfully. It was his custom to make his notes as he could procure the material he needed; nothing that could be made to serve his purpose was overlooked; and he accumulated many volumes of manuscript copy-books of miscellaneous notes for his history¹⁰ before he began its actual composition. His vacations were partly devoted to his work. Upon his annual rambles he was on the look-out for literary as well as architectural treasures, and he was sometimes rewarded with a 'find' that would make a modern bibliophile green with envy. For example, he 'picked up . . . in a petty shop at Salisbury, where books, bacon, red-herring, and old iron were exposed to sale' a third edition of *Venus and Adonis*¹¹ 'bound up with many coeval small poets' into 'a Dutch-built but dwarfish volume.'¹²

He habitually spent his vacations with his brother at Winchester, and there he settled down to the actual composition of his history. There he had ample leisure and, if not the most favourable library facilities, at least the advantage of the sympathetic criticism of his most congenial friend, his brother.

By 1769 he had amassed nearly all of the material and the edition of *Theocritus* was so far out of the way that he expected to proceed rapidly with the history. 'I am sitting down in good Earnest to write the *History of English Poetry*', he wrote to Percy in July from Oxford.

⁹'I have searched in vain for Marlowe's *Dido* with the Elegy among Tanner's Books which are squeezed into a most incommodious room, covered with dust, unclassified, and without a catalogue. Such is the confused and impracticable State of this Collection, that I have often been unable to find a book a second time which I have seen not half a year before. . . . My friend Mr. Price of the Bodleian talks of a Catalogue to Tanner's Books, but I fear it is at a distance.' Letter to Edmund Malone, Jun. 22d, 1781, Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 30375, no. 1.

¹⁰Of which many are still to be seen in Trinity College Library, Oxford, and at Winchester College. The handwriting is very difficult, often really illegible.

¹¹1596. It is called the second by Malone, in the preface to his Shakespeare, p. lxii.

¹²Letter to Malone, Mar. 19, 1785, B. M. MSS. Add. 30375, no. 2.

'It will be a large work; but as variety of materials have been long collected, it will be soon completed.'¹³ At the close of his summer's work on it at Winchester he reported 'a very considerable progress in [his] work.'¹⁴ Early the following year Gray sent Warton, at Hurd's request, the sketch of his own plan for a similar work, which he had readily relinquished on hearing of Warton's project. Either because of modesty or indolence he sent no materials for the work, but only a short 'sketch of the division and arrangement of the subjects.' This included an introduction 'on the poetry of the *Gallic*' and Gothic nations, and four principal parts: the School of Provence, Chaucer and his contemporaries, two later Italian schools and Spenser, and the French school introduced after the Restoration. The design, as he said, was partly taken from Pope's plan.¹⁵ Although Warton's first volume was by this time almost ready for the press, having been written according to his own different plan, he promptly acknowledged the merits of Gray's plan. At the same time he pointed out that he had followed a more strictly chronological division of the subject, interspersed with general views, 'as perhaps of a *particular species* of poetry &c. . . interwoven into the tenour of the work, without interrupting my historical series.'¹⁶

Warton's work with the history was now proceeding rapidly, though it was not, as Gray was told, already in the press at the time he sent Warton his plan. During the summer vacation at Winchester Warton made such progress that he wrote again to Percy, 'My *Opus Magnum* goes on swimmingly. We shall go to Press in October.'¹⁷ Another distracting interval delayed its progress, however, for four years longer. The final work was done at Winchester in the summer vacation of 1773. Immediately after his arrival Warton wrote to his friend Price, 'I am now recollecting my scattered Thoughts, & sitting down to complete the first volume of the *History of English Poetry*, which is to be published before next Christmas.'¹⁸

In the following year, 1774, the long-expected first volume appeared with this title: *The History of English Poetry, from the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century. To*

¹³Trin. Coll. Oxon., Jul. 4, 1769. Harv. MSS. fol. 35.

¹⁴Winchester, Sep. 28, 1769. Same MSS. fol. 36. He added, 'your generous offer of any thing you have, gives me great Encouragement, & will be gratefully remembered.'

¹⁵Gray's letter of April 15, 1770 is given almost in full in Chalmers' *English Poets*, XVIII, pp. 79-80.

¹⁶Winchester College, Apr. 20, 1770, *Ibid.* p. 81.

¹⁷Winton. Sept. 13, 1770, Harv. MSS. fol. 38.

¹⁸Winton. Aug. 16, 1773, Bodleian MSS. Auto. d. 4, fol. 5.

which are prefixed *Two Dissertations. I On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe; II On the Introduction of Learning into England.* An undated manuscript copy-book among the Warton papers in Trinity College Library contains a preliminary draft of Warton's plan for his history as far as the reign of Elizabeth, probably the first volume as originally planned. Subsequently he enlarged the plan, but without altering its chronological character; so that the inclusion of much more material lengthened his work considerably.

Plan of the History of English Poetry.

1. The Poetry subsisting among the Druids lost: The Saxons introduc'd it, of whom Hickes produces many Hymns: The old British Bards not yet lost: Robert of Gloster's Cronicle the Remains of them.

2. Pierce Plowman the first Allegorical Poem in our Tongue; which is half-Saxon as to Language; next Gower & Chaucer who went abroad & brought back with them the Learning of France & Italy (which consisted chiefly of Provencall Fictions) to enrich our tongue; so that the old British (or rather mixt Saxon) made way for foreign Terms: But Poetry received a considerable Improvement from Lydgate, who is the first English Poet we can read without hesitation.

3. The Allegoric & inventive Vein seem'd in a little time to be lost, & John Harding, a Cronicler in Rhyme brought back, as it were the Rudeness of Robert of Gloucester: But that bad Taste did not reign long; for S. Hawes soon restor'd Invention, & improved our Versification to a surprising Degree. After him appear'd Alex. Barclay, whom Hawes is yet superior to, in Language &c.

4. But, now Henry 8. being King, Learning appear'd with new Lustre & his may be called the first classical age of this country. Notwithstanding which, Skelton is nothing considerable. Yet soon after this Poetry took a new Turn, in the writings of Wyat & Surrey; who travelled into Italy: & these are the very first that give us the sketch or shadow of any polish'd Verse.

5. A fine Harvest of Poësy now shew'd itself in Q. Elizabeth's reign.

In preferring a more nearly chronological arrangement to an arbitrary classification of poets, Warton believed that he sacrificed only artificial arrangement for 'clearness and fulness of information.' He objected that 'the constraint imposed by a mechanical attention to this distribution, appeared . . . to destroy that free exertion of research with which such a history ought to be executed, and not easily reconcilable with that complication, variety, and extent of materials, which it ought to comprehend.'¹⁹ In fact his eagerness to acquaint his readers with the little-known periods of early English literature by means of frequent citations and full details was at the same time his strength and his weakness. The value and importance of his copious selections from long-neglected poems are not immediately apparent to readers of the

¹⁹*Hist. Eng. Poetry.* Preface, p. v. References are to the second edition of vol. I, 1775.

present age, to whom practically all of English literature is readily accessible in editions adapted to every degree of scholarship or the lack of it. It is a commonplace of literary history that the early eighteenth century was hopelessly ignorant of even of the most obvious facts in the history of poetry, so that the greatest poets were almost grotesquely represented upon a dismal background of ignorance and barbarism, while refined poetry was conceived as beginning with Mr. Waller. By his wealth of detail and by his historical method therefore Warton completed in his history of poetry the revolution of criticism that he had begun in his *Observations on the Faerie Queene*; what he had done for Spenser, he enabled other critics to do for other poets by putting the wealth of England's poetical past within their reach.

However, although Warton planned his history excellently, his literary antiquarianism, his love for the details of his subject, at times betrayed him. The historian permitted himself to be enticed from the logical development of his subject into all sorts of digressions and parenthetical discussions, sometimes of great length. These aberrations, interesting as many of them are in themselves, do indeed destroy the proportions of the work and obscure the outlines of what was really a well-planned history. Classical scholar though he was, Warton lacked the Greek sense of proportion and form, and his great work has far less of the simplicity of the classics than of the rich bewilderment of his favourite romances. In nothing is his 'romanticism' more evident than in his *History of English Poetry*. He is like a traveller exploring a new and delightful country, bewildered by enchanting by-ways diverging in all directions, so that however constant the pointing of his compass, his progress is delayed by innumerable excursions. Although his exploration is neither quite thorough nor quite complete, his guide book is both fascinating in itself and invaluable in pointing out the way for future travellers through the same land.

Warton was unable to begin his history at an earlier point than Pope or Gray had proposed, a fault of which he was conscious. His excuse was his ignorance of Anglo-Saxon,—of which all but a very few antiquarians of his day were also ignorant—so that even the slightest study of the subject would have almost doubled a labour that was at best little short of Herculean. To atone in some degree for the omission of the earlier periods, and to clear the way for the history proper, Warton thought it necessary to preface his first volume with two dissertations in which he considered in some detail materials which, while important for the development of his subject, would have marred the unity of his design. The second of these dissertations, *On the Introduction of Learning into England*, is crammed with valuable facts concerning the period before the history itself begins; facts which, presented as

Warton presented them, were more interesting to the antiquarian than to the man of taste, but which had at least the charm of novelty. And the author's satisfaction that the barrenness of scholastic learning yielded place to the 'beautiful extravagancies of romantic²⁰ fabling' is an interesting expression of his sound belief that imagination is a more important factor than reason in the production of great poetry.

In the first dissertation, *On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe*, Warton was dealing with a subject which had always fascinated him, and to which he first gave the importance it deserved in the history of English literature. His theory of the origin of romance in Europe, however, is marred by the absurd and fanciful ethnologies advanced by the seventeenth and eighteenth century scholars upon which it was necessarily based. Without the solid foundation supplied by the recently developed sciences of comparative philology and anthropology, earlier scholars had recourse to vague theories based upon superficial resemblances that now seem unworthy of serious attention. These prevalent misconceptions Warton naturally accepted, so that much of his theory of romance is now antiquated, though, as usual, many details are singularly correct and illuminating.

Warton's manner of arriving at his theory that the material of romantic fiction was largely of ultimately oriental origin is far more questionable than the conclusion itself, and his happy discovery of at least a half-truth when reasoned certainty was—and perhaps still is—impossible, is remarkably like genius. His perfectly clear recognition of the importance of oral poetry as a source of written poetry,²¹ his happily conjectured theory of the gradual building up of long romances by the artistic combination of previously existing shorter narratives,²² his acceptance of Bretagne as an ancient centre of romantic story where Celtic influence combined with British, Scandinavian, and French,²³ and his conclusion that various as were their sources, the earliest metrical romances were written in French,²⁴ are theories which, though still in dispute, a modern scholar need not fear to avow, and even one of which he would be proud to father. They show also an ability to deal with comparative literature and an intimate knowledge of middle English literature far in advance of his age, and illustrate his positive genius for

²⁰Warton used the term *romantic* here as a derivative of romance, that kind of fictitious tale characteristic of mediæval literature. In this sense he said it was 'entirely unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome.'

²¹*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, Diss. I, pp. (1), (31-2). The pages in the dissertations are not numbered in the first editions; this numbering is, therefore, my own.

²²*Ibid.* p. (9), and vol. I, p. 38.

²³*Ibid.* Diss. I, pp. (3-9), (48).

²⁴*Ibid.* vol. I, p. 145.

pointing out ways by which subsequent scholars were to obtain valuable results.

As in his *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, Warton's study of romances involved also the social and religious life of an age which was as richly imaginative in its romantic chivalry and its deep-seated faith in the miraculous as in its literature. Not the least valuable part of the discussion of the earlier periods was the copious extracts from the old romances.—*Richard Cœur de Leon*, *Sir Guy*, *the Squire of Low Degree*, and others that had long lain neglected in dusty old manuscript collections. Unscholarly as the texts of these excerpts are, they stimulated interest in the originals and were no doubt partly responsible for the series of modernizations and editions of romances which followed.²⁵ His study of the romances and other early poetry²⁶ indicates his attempt to take into account the elusive but none the less potent influences upon English poetry even before the time of Chaucer and the generally recognized poets, and distinguishes him from an age of critics who, whatever they may have thought of the poetic genius of the first English poets, denied them their due place in the development of English poetry and entirely disregarded any influences upon them.²⁷ Warton differs from every other critic of his age in constantly regarding literature as a whole, as a continual stream of progress—with eddies and whirlpools and backwaters—but also with a steady and deep current, and with numberless tributaries.

Although Warton properly excluded dramatic poetry from his design, he was unable to resist the temptation to discuss its origin and early development, and his two long digressions²⁸ constitute the first valuable study of that subject and complete his interpretation of mediæval life. On the basis of his reading of French memoirs on the subject,²⁹ and his first hand acquaintance with the 'originals' in 'books

²⁵The early editors of romances, Ritson, Ellis, and Weber, constantly refer to Warton's *History*.

²⁶Warton has extracts from many favourite mediæval lyrics, *Alison*, *Lenten is come with love to town*, *Sumer is icumen*, etc., as well as from many such longer poems as *Hule and Nightengale*, *Manuel de Peche*, and *Land of Cokayne*.

²⁷'I cannot . . . help observing, that English literature and English poetry suffer, while so many pieces of this kind still remain concealed and forgotten in our manuscript libraries. They contain in common with the prose romances . . . amusing instances of antient customs and institutions . . . and they preserve pure and unmixed, those fables of chivalry which formed the taste and awakened the imagination of our elder English classics.' I, pp. 208-9.

²⁸*Ibid.* I, pp. 233-251; II, 366-406; III, 321-328.

²⁹Du Tillot's *Memoirs pour servir à l'histoire de la Fête de Foux*, 1741, and Voltaire's *Essais sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations*, 1756, and others; see bibliography of sources.

and manuscripts not easily found nor often examined,³⁰ he discussed the religious, secular and scholastic beginnings of the drama in a way that was not only valuable for its originality at the time it appeared, but authoritative as late as the second quarter of the next century when Collier quoted it as the most valuable source of information on the subject.³¹

Chaucer is of course the chief figure in the first volume of the history, and it is by the adequacy and soundness of the criticism of his work that Warton's ability is best tested. Professor Lounsbury's estimate of its value is juster than his explanation of its faults. The 'work . . . is one', he says, 'which it will perhaps be always necessary to consult for its facts, its references, and its inferences; and though in many points it needs to be corrected, a long time will certainly elapse before it will be superseded. . . . But while the substantial merits of the chapters on Chaucer need not be denied, they are very far from being perfectly satisfactory.' Its defects are however due rather to Warton's inevitably imperfect knowledge of middle English and of Chaucer's sources—though his knowledge at this point was approached by none of his generation save Tyrwhitt—than, as Professor Lounsbury supposes, to his desire 'to parade his own knowledge' rather than to throw light upon his author, or to an apologetic air that gives the 'impression that he admired Chaucer greatly, and was ashamed of himself for having been caught in the act.'³² In this Professor Lounsbury seems to have fallen somewhat into the common habit of condemning eighteenth century critics *en masse* without making sufficient distinctions among them. Warton's learning is never ostentatious although he is often unwise in not making a more rigid selection of material; and he conspicuously lacks the apologetic attitude adopted by some of his contemporaries. Nothing is more certain than that he had more than the eighteenth century antiquary's boundless curiosity—although he had that too; he was animated by genuine love of learning and real interest in making accessible to others the dark places in literary and social history, and, since he would entirely fail of his purpose if he antagonized his public, he used every means to arouse in them the same enthusiasm that he himself

³⁰*Hist. Eng. Poetry*. I, p. 250.

³¹Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry to the time of Shakespeare*, 1831. Preface. Malone's essay, an *Historical Account of the . . . English Stage*, prefixed to his edition of Shakespeare in 1790 quotes Warton's history freely and was probably further indebted to Warton's later private study. See Warton's letters to Malone, printed in full with notes, in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. XIV, no. I, pp. 107-118.

³²*Studies in Chaucer*, 3 vols. 1892. III, pp. 246-7.

felt for those splendid periods of English poetry before their own elegant and polished age.

The historical method which had been Warton's great contribution to criticism in his *Observations on the Faerie Queen* he applied more extensively in the *History of Poetry*. The first step in the study of Chaucer was an attempt to represent his social and literary environment and antecedents in order that he might be rightly understood. The eighteenth century gentleman of taste despised Chaucer because, by an anachronism that passed over four centuries of literary activity and progress as if they were nothing, they insisted upon judging him by the same standards which they applied to Pope and Waller. Warton, first realizing the fallacy of this method, studied the wide diversity in manners, customs, and literary ideals of the two periods and made the necessary allowance for the difference. It seemed to him worth while to consider Chaucer as the brilliant student, the popular and favoured courtier and diplomat, the extensive traveller, and the polished man of the world as well as the 'first English versifier who wrote poetically,'³³ since his familiarity with splendid processions and gallant carousals, with the practices and diversions of polite life, his connections with the great at home and his personal acquaintance with the vernacular poetry of foreign countries, helped to mould his poetry quite as much as his knowledge of the classical writers, and enabled him to give in the *Canterbury Tales* 'such an accurate picture of antient manners, as no coteremporary has transmitted to posterity.'³⁴

Warton's study of Chaucer's literary antecedents shows a more thorough knowledge of the comparative field of literature during the Middle Ages than he is sometimes credited with.³⁵ His discussion of Provençal literature, based largely upon the study of the French and Italian antiquaries and historians,³⁶ and of its influence upon English poetry, especially upon Chaucer, is much abler and fuller than any previous discussions of the subject³⁷ and may still be read with profit. He treats briefly but suggestively such important points for the study of Chaucer as the moral and allegorical tendency of Provençal poetry, its relation to classical poetry on the side of allegory,³⁸ its mystical and conventional conception of love, and the nice distinction between the metaphysical delicacy of the Provençal ideal of love represented in

³³Johnson: *Dictionary*, Pref. p. 1., and *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, I, p. 341 ff.

³⁴*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, I, p. 435.

³⁵e.g. Saintsbury: *The Flourishing of Romance*, New York, 1907. p. 139.

³⁶See bibliography of sources.

³⁷Rymer: *A Short View of Tragedy*, 1693, pp. 67-83. Pope and Gray, plans for a history of poetry.

³⁸*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, I, p. 457.

Guillaume de Lorris and the conventional formality of the later method of reducing the passion of love to a system, based upon Ovid's *Art of Love*.³⁹

Warton also made a detailed study of Chaucer's relations to his sources that anticipated modern investigation of the subject. His discovery of *Le Teseide* as the source of the *Knight's Tale* was an important contribution that probably owed nothing to Thynne's similar assertion.⁴⁰ Both Dryden and Urry had recognized Chaucer's general indebtedness to Boccaccio on his own statements, but the nature and extent of the indebtedness had not been discussed before.⁴¹ In his study of Chaucer's sources Warton was, however, even more concerned to show his originality than his mere borrowings, his heightenings of the original fictions, the additions and contractions which help to make his poems 'strike us with an air of originality,'⁴² a charm further increased by his 'considerable talents for the artificial construction of a story'⁴³ and his 'nervous' and 'flowing numbers'. His enthusiasm was keenest for his most original work, the *Canterbury Tales*, 'specimens of Chaucer's narrative genius, unassisted and unalloyed,' in which 'the figures are all British, and bear no suspicious signatures of classical, Italian, or French imitation.'⁴⁴ And he justified his method by showing that this great

³⁹*Ibid.* I, p. 383.

⁴⁰Francis Thynne's *Animadversions*, etc., 1598 (Chaucer Society, 1876, p. 43). Warton would certainly have referred to this had he known of it. A note to Tyrwhitt's *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*, 'It is so little a while since the world has been informed that the *Palamon and Arcite* of Chaucer was taken from the *Teseida* of Boccace,' seems to point to Warton as the author of the discovery.

Joseph Warton, in his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* expressed surprise that Chaucer's borrowing from Boccaccio should have been so long unobserved, since Nicéron, in his *Memoirs*, published in 1736—a book which he says was well-known, had given an abstract of the story of *Palamon and Arcite*. He added, '*G. Chaucer, l'Homere de son pays, a mis l'ouvrage de Boccace en vers Anglois.*' (I, p. 335, ed. 1806.) Neither Thomas Warton nor Tyrwhitt mentions this work however. This passage in J. Warton's essay was first inserted in an appendix to the third edition (1772-1782) and in the body of the fourth edition in 1782. The recent discovery of the source of *Palamon and Arcite* to which he refers was therefore certainly his brother's. (Mr. David H. Bishop, of Columbia University, has looked up this passage for me in the various editions of J. Warton's essay.)

⁴¹The authority and adequacy of Warton's discussion are shown by the fact that Skeat refers his readers to this section of Warton's history 'for further remarks on this Tale.' Ed. *Chaucer*, 1894, III, 394.

⁴²*Ibid.* I, p. 357.

⁴³*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, p. 367.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* I, p. 435.

achievement was the result of Chaucer's 'knowledge of the world' and 'observation on life' combined with his literary artistry and his genius.

Although Warton set out to be the historian rather than the critic of English poetry, his history is shot through with flashes of his enthusiasm for natural and imaginative rather than conventional and reasoned beauties. He admired the *Knight's Tale* not for those partial conformities to the rules for epic poetry that commended it to Dryden and Urry, but in spite of its violation of the rules and because of its direct appeal to the imagination and feelings. 'It abounds', he says, 'in those incidents which are calculated to strike the fancy by opening resources to sublime description, or interest the heart by pathetic situations. On this account, even without considering the poetical and exterior ornaments of the piece, we are hardly disgusted with the mixture of manners, the confusion of times, and the like violations of propriety, which this poem, in common with all others of its age, presents in almost every page.'⁴⁵ His study of the *House of Fame* shows a similar appreciation of the essential beauties of romantic poetry: he praised it for its 'great strokes of Gothic imagination, yet bordering often on the most ideal and capricious extravagance,'⁴⁶ and condemned Pope's mistaken attempt to 'correct its extravagancies, by new refinements and additions of another cast,' in the famous comparison: 'An attempt to unite order and exactness of imagery with a subject formed on principles so professedly romantic and anomalous, is like giving Corinthian pillars to a Gothic palace. When I read Pope's elegant imitation of this piece, I think I am walking among the modern monuments unsuitably placed in Westminster Abbey.'⁴⁷

Warton's real taste for imaginative poetry as represented in the romances and Chaucer's poetry, made him dwell lovingly and long on that period, on Chaucer as at once the flower of romance and the renaissance and as an independent and original genius superior to his age, and lament the inevitability of the decay of imaginative poetry after his death. Although he had intended to complete the history of seven centuries of English poetry in two volumes, he devoted, perhaps not altogether unwisely, the whole first volume to the least known and least prolific period and turned with reluctance from that period to one in which the decay of romance was followed by a revival of learning. He recognized that the new age would have its compensations: 'As knowledge and learning encrease, poetry begins to deal less in imagination:

⁴⁵*Ibid.* I, p. 367.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* I, p. 389.

⁴⁷*Ibid.* I, p. 306.

and these fantastic beings give way to real manners and living characters;' yet he knew too that a revival of imagination must precede another great poetic age.

CHAPTER VI

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY. VOLUME II. 1778

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

At the time the first volume of the *History of Poetry* was published, Warton had in hand much of the material for the second, and expected it to follow very soon. In September following the appearance of the first volume he wrote to his friend Price, 'I have the pleasure to tell you that great part of the second volume of my History is ready for press'.¹ The work, however, did not go on so well as was expected, and the second volume was delayed for four years. It was just at this time that Lord North, who had been a contemporary of Warton at Trinity, sent his son up to Oxford to be under Warton's special charge from 1774 to 1777, during which time he relinquished his other pupils.² The preparation of a collected edition of his poems, which appeared in 1777, must also have hindered the history somewhat.

Probably the principal reason for the delay of the second volume however was the necessity the author felt of including in it a discussion of the Rowley-Chatterton poems which were then almost universally believed to be genuine fifteenth century poems. Warton had called them spurious when they were submitted to him by the Chancellor of Oxford, the Earl of Lichfield, in 1772, but they were so generally accepted as genuine, even by Tyrwhitt, who later helped to expose the forgery, that he reluctantly admitted them to a place in his history, at the same time denying their authenticity. Warton's first step in this matter had been to send to William Barrett, the Bristol antiquary-surgeon, for conclusive evidence. Although Barrett furnished him with plenty of information,³ he was a complete victim of Chatterton's hoax, and Warton was naturally dissatisfied with his verdict. He then appealed to Perey for a less biased opinion, in the following letter:—

Dear Sir

I should esteem it a particular favour if you could conveniently communicate to me what you know about Rowley's poems at Bristol. I have a correspondence with

¹Winton. Sept. 30, 1774. Mant, Op. cit. p. lxxiv.

²*Ibid.*, pp. lxxiv-lxxv.

³*Ilist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 142, note. References to the second and third volumes are to the first edition.

Mr. Barret of that place, but he rather embarrasses than clears the subject. He has sent me a fragment of Parchment; on it a piece of a poem on a Mayor's feast, the ink & the Parchment seemingly antient. It is necessary that I should consider him whether spurious or not, as there has been so much noise about the Discovery, & as so many are convinced of the poems being genuine. If possible, I request the favour of your answer immediately; & am, Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate
friend & servt
T. Warton.

Jul. 29, 1774

Winchester

P. S. Please to direct at Winton.⁴

Percy's reply is not to be found, but cannot have been convincing, for a year and a half later Warton was still trying vainly to bring himself to the popular opinion, and hurried by the demands of his printer.

Dear Sir

I have received the favour of yours, which is quite satisfactory.

As to Chatterton, I have considered that subject pro and con, not professing to enter *minutely* into the controversy, but just as much as the general nature of my work properly required. I own I lean to the side of the forgery; but if you could send me *only one capital* argument in favor of the genuineness of Rowlie's poems, I should accept it most thankfully. I would willingly come to town on purpose, but it is impossible: and at the same time I am ashamed to interrupt your Engagements. The Press is drawing near to this period. I will send you speedily the Extract you mention from the Selden Manuscript: and am, Dear Sir, your most affectionate

humble servt.
T. Warton

Trin. Coll.—

Jan 25 1776

To

Reverend Dr. Percy
at Northumberland-house
London⁵

Another letter to Percy written a month later shows the volume going on through the press and Warton busy with the rest of the volume.

Dear Sir

Since I wrote last, the sheet in which is a Note⁶ about James the first, is gone to Press. I send a proof of the Note, which perhaps will give you as much Information as you want on the Subject. Otherwise, I will make a further search, & gett the poem transcribed if necessary. I throw in, *Currente Prælo*, the notice

⁴Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 32329 f. 76.

⁵Same, f. 83.

⁶*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, 125-6.

at the end about a *song* being in your possession. My work, (I mean the Second Volume,) which is much indebted to you, goes on very briskly.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate
humble servant

T. Warton.

Trin Coll. Oxon.

Feb. 22, 1776.⁷

The progress of the second volume though steady was slow. In November, 1776, Warton was hopeful that it would soon appear,⁸ but he spent the following summer at Winchester hard at work upon it, and in September wrote to Price, 'My second volume goes on swimmingly. I have already written almost the whole; but I intend a third volume, of which more when we meet.'⁹ The next year the second volume was published.

Warton had closed his first volume with a note of regret that the flowering of romance was inevitably followed by a period of greater learning but of poetic decadence; the second volume was taken up with the struggle between learning and imagination which was to result in their fusion in the great poetic age. For this period Warton had less genuine enthusiasm and interest than for the more imaginative and productive periods, and this volume is therefore less satisfactory; it is a more miscellaneous mass of minute discussions of details and of general views of important large subjects into which at times flash the genius and enthusiasm of the critic. In his first volume he had shown how Chaucer was influenced by his age; in the second he showed how certain of the influences upon him becoming dominant had suppressed poetry, how Chaucer's genius could combine romance and learning while his contemporaries with less genius and more ambition to be thought scholars¹⁰ sacrificed romance to learning, imagination to reason and were the worse poets. 'On this account,' he said, 'the minstrels of these times, who were totally uneducated, and poured forth spontaneous rhymes in obedience to the workings of nature, often exhibit more genuine strokes of passion and imagination, than the professed poets.'¹⁰ Warton's revolt against the classical age is nowhere more apparent than in the stand he took for imagination and spontaneity as the essential qualities of poetry, and against reason and artificiality as its corrupters. In his discussion of the poetic decadence of the fifteenth century he

⁷Same, f. 85.

⁸Letter to Gough, Nov. 11, 1776. *Lit. Anec.* VI, p. 178.

⁹Mant, *Op. cit.* lxxv.

¹⁰*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 31.

was, of course, crying out against the over-emphasis of reason in his own age, and looking forward to a similar revival of imagination and poetry.

Warton's high valuation of imagination and originality did not, however, blind him to lesser merits. It is a credit to his historical sense that with only a general survey of the political, social, and literary conditions of the period and with no accurate knowledge of philology,¹¹ he was able to recognize the importance of the transition period for the development and enrichment of the language, and to point out that Chaucer, Gower, and Oeeleve had not, as was generally thought,¹² 'corrupted the purity of the English language, by affecting to introduce so many foreign words and phrases,'¹³ but that they had used the language of their age, a language that was then undergoing important changes particularly under French influence, and that was gaining in 'copiousness, elegance, and harmony' by these innovations.¹⁴

His appreciation of Chaucer's contemporaries too was remarkably just; in discussing them he fell neither into the error of absurdly exaggerating their merits, nor, by too close comparison with Chaucer, of equally absurdly underrating their importance. He found in Gower an almost perfect example of a poet whose erudition overtopped his invention, who was 'serious and didactic on all occasions' and possessed 'the tone of the scholar and the moralist on the most lively topics,'¹⁵ who 'supplied from his common-place book' what he 'wanted in invention.'¹⁶ Yet he realized that Gower was not only important for the historical study of the progress of English poetry during the fifteenth century but of such intrinsic value that 'if Chaucer had not existed,' his poetry 'would alone have been sufficient to rescue the reigns of Edward the third and Richard the second from the imputation of barbarism.'¹⁷ Warton's analysis of the influence of the mediæval story-books, those 'commodious abridgements' of all sacred and profane stories in which both classical and mediæval stories were adapted to the taste of the times, upon which Gower's *Confessio Amantis* was modelled, and from which it drew quite as much as from Jean de Meun's part of the

¹¹Even such as Tyrwhitt possessed. Ed. Chaucer, *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*.

¹²Both Dr. Johnson and Tyrwhitt likewise remonstrated against this belief . . . *The History of the English Language*, prefaced to Johnson's *Dictionary*, 1755, and Tyrwhitt's *Essay*.

¹³*Hist. Eng. Poetry*. II, p. 50.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.* II, p. 2.

¹⁶*Ibid.* II, p. 4.

¹⁷*Ibid.* II, p. 1.

Roman de la Rose, shows an extensive knowledge of the literary traditions of the period and of their development in the next age into an eager interest in the original authors from which the compilations had been made.¹⁸ In addition to this just criticism, he made an original contribution to the study of Gower by the discovery of the *Cinquantes Balades* and the publication of four of them with appropriate recognition of their merit and discussion of their relation to French and English love poems.¹⁹

Lydgate's treatment of romantic material concerned the historian quite as much as the versatility and ease of versification which he was inclined to think placed him next to Chaucer in those respects at least. He did not, however, neglect his poetry, though he did not attempt, as Ritson did, to enumerate the long list of poems attributed to him.²⁰ He evidently desired to do justice to him as a poet who 'moved with equal ease in every mode of composition,' who was clear and fluent in phrase but often 'tedious and languid.'²¹ With true poetic taste he managed to cull from the *Life of our Lady* a number of the best lines, which probably improved the poet's reputation.²²

It has been said that Warton considered it necessary to discuss the Rowley poems in that period of the history to which their pretended author belonged. While we cannot altogether approve his judgment in so doing, his defense, that, since they were generally accredited,²³ though

¹⁸*Ibid.* II, 11, ff.

¹⁹Emendations to volume II. Warton found these French poems in a manuscript lent him by Lord Trentham.

²⁰Warton was well aware of their great number; 'To enumerate Lydgate's pieces, would be to write the catalogue of a little library.' He realized that to catalogue them was then less worth while than to present a just estimate of the poet and his best work. Ritson's list, in his *Bibliographia Poetica*, was a valuable achievement for its time. Ed. 1802, pp. 66-87.

²¹*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, pp. 52, 58.

²²Gray's praise of Lydgate was somewhat extravagant; he quoted some lines which he declared entitled him to a place among the greatest poets, but mentioned the *Life of our Lady* only in a note, making no quotation from it. His *Remarks on the Poems of Lydgate* are among the few manuscript notes which he had made for his history of poetry, published from his commonplace book in 1814 by T. J. Mathias. *Works* II, pp. 55-80.

²³There was some disagreement among scholars as to their authenticity. Warton had been sceptical when he first saw them in 1772, and Johnson had satisfied himself of the imposture in 1776. Walpole seems to have considered them genuine until Mason and Gray, to whom he sent the manuscripts sent him by Chatterton,

not generally accessible,²⁴ it was his duty to give them a place if only that a more just estimate of their authenticity might be formed,²⁵ has some weight, and he was the first to attempt an adequate discussion of the question.

Warton's impartial presentation of the question affords an illustration of his openmindedness that is the more interesting and creditable to him because the conclusion at which he had arrived seems to have been unwelcome. Apparently he would have been glad to find that these remarkable poems were really the work of a monk of the fifteenth century. 'It is with regret that I find myself obliged to pronounce Rowlie's poems to be spurious. Ancient remains of English poetry, unexpectedly discovered, and fortunately rescued from a long oblivion, are contemplated with a degree of fond enthusiasm: exclusive of any real or intrinsic excellence, they afford those pleasures, arising from the idea of antiquity, which deeply interest the imagination. With these pleasures we are unwilling to part. But there is a more solid satisfaction, resulting from the detection of artifice and imposture.'²⁶ His romantic imagination was kindled at the thought of poems hidden away for three hundred years in Cannynge's chest in Radcliffe Church, and accidentally discovered and rescued from wanton sacrifice to the utilitarian end of making writing-book covers. His love of antiquarian treasures was outraged at the thought of what might have been in this way lost to literary and social history. He rejoiced that the schoolmaster of Bristol

declared them forgeries. Warton: *Enquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley*, London, 1782, p. 1. Boswell's *Life*, Hill Ed. III, p. 50, and *Letters*, I, pp. 398 and 404. Walpole: *Letters*, Toynbee Ed. X, p. 246. Cf. also *Dic. Nat. Biog.* art. *Chatterton*. Goldsmith believed firmly in them. Walpole: *Works*, ed. 1798, IV, p. 224. Tyrwhitt had not given up the authenticity of the poems at the time Warton's discussion was written. *Emendations to the Hist. Eng. Poetry*, vol. II, p. 164. His appendix to prove that they were written wholly by Chatterton was added to the third edition of the poems which appeared simultaneously with Warton's second volume, 1778.

²⁴Only two of the poems were printed before Tyrwhitt's anonymous edition of *Poems supposed to have been written at Bristol, by Thomas Rowley and others, in the Fifteenth Century*, . . . 1777, by which time this part of Warton's history was written. *Emendations*, II, 164. Letters to Percy, *supra*. The unknown author of *An Examination of the poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, and William Cannynge. With a defense of the opinion of Mr. Warton*, (?1782), said, 'at the time Mr. Warton published his history, these Poems were not published; only few were in possession of copies of them; the world at large was totally ignorant of their contents. . . . Even the industry of Mr. Warton could procure but few specimens of them when in manuscript.' p. 7.

²⁵*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 139.

²⁶*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 164.

was not without a taste for poetry and that his extraordinarily gifted son recognized the merits of the poems and offered them to the world. The possibilities of this promising situation almost carried Warton to a belief in the story,—but when he turned to the poems themselves, the illusion vanished. Rowley might have been a scholar, an historian, an antiquary, a poet, but he could hardly have been the author of the poems ascribed to him.²⁷

Although as a scholar Warton condemned the poems as forgeries, as a poet he could not but be struck by their poetic excellence,—no less remarkable as the work of a boy of sixteen than as that of a monk of the fifteenth century. With an extravagant enthusiasm, more like that of the later 'romantic' admirers of Chatterton than his own usual moderation, he exclaimed, 'This youth, who died at eighteen, was a prodigy of genius: and would have proved the first of English poets, had he reached a maturer age.'²⁸

Warton's discussion of the Chatterton forgeries, although the first,²⁹ was by no means the last; the controversy was kept up with a stubbornness that was made possible only by the ignorance and gullibility of the Rowley supporters.³⁰ And it may be quite as well to anticipate somewhat and finish here the discussion of Warton's connection with it. While the question of authenticity was virtually settled from the start by every scholar of any competence,—Gray, Malone, Johnson, Warton, Tyrwhitt,—there were a number of scholarly clergymen so tenacious of a belief very scantily based upon external evidence only, that it became necessary for final and decisive proof to be furnished by some competent authority. Two of the most learned men of the age, Warton and Tyrwhitt, offered to say this last word in 1782;³¹ and the efforts of both were of nearly equal effect at the time of their publication; they convinced all who were open to conviction.

The merit of Warton's conclusion in the Chatterton controversy can be

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 156.

²⁸*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 157. Chas. Kent, in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.* erroneously ascribed this remark to Joseph Warton.

²⁹Walpole's *Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Chatterton*, Strawberry-Hill; 1779, is rather a discussion of Walpole's relations with Chatterton than of the forgeries themselves. Walpole's *Works*, IV, p. 207 ff.

³⁰For bibliography of the Chatterton controversy, see *Chattertoniana*, by F. A. Hyett and W. Bazeley. Gloucester, 1914.

³¹Warton: *An Enquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley. In which the arguments of the Dean of Exeter, and Mr. Bryant are examined.* London, 1782. Two editions in the same year.

Tyrwhitt: *A Vindication of the Appendix to the Poems, called Rowley's, in reply to the Answers of the Dean of Exeter, etc.,* London, 1782.

adequately appreciated only by a recognition of the fact that he reached it not only in opposition to his inelination, but without the help of any thorough knowledge of the language of the fifteenth century such as Tyrwhitt possessed, and its importance only by the fact just mentioned that it contributed quite as much to settle the controversy in the eighteenth century as even Tyrwhitt's more scholarly essay. It is a striking fact that although Warton's criticism of Chatterton's affected obsolete words could be based only upon superficial observation, he not only objected to their genuineness on this ground, but was able to cite some of the very books from which the young poet must actually have derived his remarkable vocabulary.³²

Moreover, the conclusiveness of a purely scholarly argument based entirely upon accurate knowledge of the philological side of the problem was not so promptly recognized in an age of general ignorance of philology as it would be today. A proof that would convince the dilettante supporters of Rowley must be based upon the more obvious qualities of the poems which they could recognize. This was the sort of argument that Warton's pamphlet furnished. Therefore whatever superiority Tyrwhitt showed as a philologist was equalled by Warton's superiority as a critic and student of literature,—a fact that has not always received due credit. He was able to compare the literary traditions and conditions of the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries and decide even without reference to specific language tests, to which period a group of poems belonged. By this method he easily demonstrated that the affiliations of the Rowley poems were altogether with the eighteenth century. He concluded the discussion thus, 'Upon the whole, . . . if there are such things as principles of analogy, if the rules which criticism has established for judging of the age of a poem, are beyond the caprice of conjecture, then are the *TRAGEDY OF ELLA* and the *BATTLE OF HASTINGS*, modern compositions: if they are antient, then are the elegancies of Gibbon's style coeval with the deplorable prose of Caxton.'³³

Returning to the proper subjects of the history of poetry in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Chaucerian imitators, Warton found less interesting material than the Chatterton forgeries; imagination was more and more oppressed by conscious effort. Yet he creditably performed the duty of an historian, considering carefully the relations between Hawes³⁴ and Lydgate, between Barclay's *Ship of Fools* and

³²*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 157. See also Skeat's ed. *Chatterton*, London, 1901, 2 vols. II, pp. xxv-xxvii, and xli.

³³*Enquiry*, p. 90.

³⁴Warton was cited as an authority on Hawes by Thomas Wright in the only modern edition of the *Pastime of Pleasure*, for the Percy Society, vol. 18, 1845.

Brandt's *Narrenschiſſe* through Latin and French translations, and the growing modernity of the language of these poets. He accompanied the whole with numerous quotations from these then almost inaccessible fifteenth century poems³⁵ of almost unknown poets. He also found it necessary, as has every other historian of English poetry, to give an account of the Scottish poets³⁶ who preserved the traditions of Chaucer as none of his English successors was able to preserve it, and who 'adorned the . . . period, with a degree of sentiment and spirit, a command of phraseology, and a fertility of imagination, not to be found in any English poet since Chaucer and Lydgate.'³⁷

Two significant points stand out in the discussion of the poems of Dunbar, Douglas and Lindsay:³⁸ the theory of poetic diction implied in the experiment of turning Douglas's *Prologue to May*³⁹ into prose to show that its high poetic quality did not depend altogether upon the form, and the recognition of the influence of racial characteristics in national poetry. Warton's experiment of placing a prose paraphrase in juxtaposition with the poem to show the originality of the poet's genius and the beauty of its poetical matter independent of its form—a test to which it would have been dangerous to subject much of Queen Anne poetry—was a great stride in the direction of the new romantic conception of poetry; it suggests Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction without its absurdities. For although Warton intended a deliberate revolt against the too prevalent tendency to regard poetry as largely a more or less skillful combination of poetic diction and metrical composition, he did not go to the opposite extreme of regarding these things as non-essentials, of considering the prose form as quite as poetical as the verse form. Of the characteristic beauties of Douglas's poem he

³⁵Warton's quotations from Barclay's eclogues were particularly valuable, for those poems were reprinted from the exceedingly rare black letter folio of 1570, from which he quoted them only in 1885, for the Spenser Society, vol. 39. See also T. H. Jamieson's edition of the *Ship of Fools*, 2 vols. 1874. Prefatory note.

³⁶Warton's not very valuable sources, besides the universal histories, were the collection of biographies amassed by the over-patriotic Dempster, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum*, Bologna, 1627, and MacKenzie's 'shapeless mass of inert matter,' *The Lives and Characters of the Most Eminent Writers of the Scotch Nation*, 1708-22.

³⁷*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 257.

³⁸Warton had mentioned James I's *King's Complaint*, as he called it, in his second volume (note p. 125) where the poem was first mentioned and quoted from.

³⁹The poem was not unknown. Two English versions had appeared in 1752, one in the *Scot's Magazine*, by Jerome Stone, the other by Francis Fawkes. The latter was also included in *Original Poems and Translations*, 1761. Fawkes's translation was reprinted for the Aungerville Society, 1884-6, vol. III.

said, 'Divested of poetic numbers and expression, they still retain their poetry; and . . . appear like Ulysses, still a king and conqueror, although disguised like a peasant.'⁴⁰ This experiment is part of Warton's general revolt, both in poetry and in criticism, against the artificial poetry written by the Augustan poets and upheld by the Augustan critics,⁴¹ and his attempt to re-establish a higher kind of poetry which combines poetic substance and poetic form in an inseparable whole.

It was the prominence of satire in the Scotch allegorical poetry, especially the satire of church abuses, that led Warton to remark the influence upon Scotch literature of the characteristic Scotch temper, a kind of remark more common in the next century than in his own. The modernity of Warton's attitude becomes more apparent when one compares it with Dr. Johnson's contempt for the Scotch temper which he never attempted to understand. Warton however pointed out that in the peculiarly philosophical or rationalistic temper of the Scotch, a disposition almost without imagination and responsive not to an imaginative and sensuous appeal but to reason alone, was to be found the explanation of the ready adoption in Scotland of the severe reformed religion and of the greater violence and abundance of satirical attacks upon the Roman Catholic faith.⁴²

The originality of Skelton, as it seemed not to have its source in more lively imagination, did not atone, in the mind of the historian, for the deliberate roughness of his verse, and his satirical power, reinforced though it was with humour and the gift of personification, he did not think adequate to excuse his coarseness. Warton had much of the eighteenth century insistence upon sound moral standards in criticism. As an historian of the progress of literature, he did not fail to consider in his discussion of Skelton the importance of his moralities in the history of the drama; in this connection is the mention of the moral interlude of *Nigramansir*,⁴³ since lost.

⁴⁰*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 289.

⁴¹See Johnson's *Life of Dryden*, *Works*, ed. cit. III, p. 439. Even Gray recognized a well-established poetic diction. See letter to West, *Works*, Ed. Gosse, 1884, II, p. 108.

⁴²*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 321.

⁴³There has been no record of *Nigramansir* since Warton saw it in the library of William Collins, at Chichester, not long before the latter's death in 1759. When the valuable collection that he had made for his intended *History of the Restoration of Learning under Leo the Tenth* was dispersed, this unique volume seems to have wholly disappeared. *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 361. But there is not, I think, any just reason for doubting Warton's honesty in this matter on this account. The perfectly simple and straightforward account of the book which he gives, exactly of a piece with many others that are unquestionable, is, *per se*, more probable than

To repeat what cannot perhaps be overemphasized, the great theme of Warton's first volume was the rise and influence of mediæval romances upon English poetry; the corresponding subject of the second volume was the revival of learning and its counter influence. His attitude toward the renaissance combines genuine appreciation of classical literature, of the 'faultless models of Greece and Rome,' and of the immense gain in depth and breadth they brought to English learning, with enthusiasm for the marvelous and delightful creations of the dark ages whose disappearance he regarded with regret. But much as he realized the poetical value of mediæval life, its variety and richness, the very savagery and irregularity of the incidents and adventures of chivalry, he regarded the revival of learning as a necessary corrective of its faults, as a 'mighty deliverance after many imperfect and interrupted efforts in which the mouldering Gothic fabrics of false religion and false philosophy fell together;' and he pointed out that it was eventually followed by a period of high attainment, that 'soon after the reign of Elizabeth, men attained that state of general improvement, and those situations with respect to literature and life, in which they have ever since persevered.'⁴⁴

The historian's careful balance of these two important elements in the early renaissance, the waning influence of mediæval poetry and the growing power of classical learning, has an added significance since their heirs—the decadent classicism of the Augustan age and that fresh infusion of imagination from a variety of sources which is commonly called the romantic revival—were disputing the supremacy of poetry in his own day, and he had a remarkably clear perception of the growing change

Ritson's ill-natured accusation that he invented the whole account. Ritson: *Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 106. Absence of motive for the deceit, Warton's general honesty, his effort to secure accuracy of detail, and the certainty that many volumes must have disappeared, incline us to accept Warton's statement for the existence in 1759 of the morality he described. Bliss defended Warton with the statement that he had 'so frequently seen and handled volumes mentioned by Warton and denied to exist by Ritson,' that he had no doubt of the authenticity of the account. *Athen. Oxon.* ed. 1813-20, I, p. 53.

The incompatibility of the accounts of the date, size, and printers of the *Magnificence* text scarcely affects this matter. While such confusion is certainly reprehensible, it is not a question of honesty but of care. It is very easy to see how such mistakes could have been made. Probably the last reference was the only one made from Warton's own observation; the others may have been made from memory, or from an inaccurate communication. *Emendations* to II, 363. See also the edition of *Magnificence* for the *Early Eng. Text Soc.*, vol. 36-38, by R. L. Ramsay, *Introd.* pp. xviii-xix and note 2.

⁴⁴*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 462.

and of its significance. He looked back to this earlier period both as one of important progress and as the source of the sterile classical imitation prevalent in his time, and he hailed with enthusiasm the revival of imagination as a sign of a new birth in poetry.

Therefore in an age which perpetuated more of the defects than the virtues of the revival of classical learning in England, Warton was disposed to emphasize the charms of the more imaginative past, showing in this respect a close sympathy with some of the more extreme 'romanticists'. With Rousseau,⁴⁵ who however lacked Warton's steadying sense of the danger attending upon unrestrained indulgence in the pleasures of imagination, he hailed 'ignorance and superstition, so opposite to the real interests of human society, (as) the parents of imagination.'⁴⁶ With Heine⁴⁷ he perceived the romantic quality of the mediæval religion and the tremendous stimulus given to literature by the picturesque and poetical appendages of the Catholic worship, which 'disposed the mind to a state of deception;' whose 'visions, miracles, and legends, propagated a general propensity to the Marvellous, and strengthened the belief of spectres, demons, witches, and incantations.'⁴⁸

Without really underestimating the immense gain in 'good sense, good taste, and good criticism' which had followed the revival of learning, he lamented the loss to pure poetry that had been consequent upon it, and he closed his second volume somewhat as he had closed the first, with regret for the vanished beauties of the middle ages: 'We have parted with extravagancies that are above propriety, with incredibilities that are more acceptable than truth, and with fictions that are more valuable than reality.'⁴⁹

⁴⁵*Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts*, 1750.

⁴⁶*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 462.

⁴⁷*Die Romantische Schule*, 1833.

⁴⁸*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 462.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* II, 463.

CHAPTER VII

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY. VOLUME III, 1781

THE DAWN OF THE GREAT POETIC AGE

The third volume of the history followed the second after an interval of three years; it was published in 1781; probably, considering the author's inevitable hindrances, as soon as it could be prepared for the printer. Again the historian permitted himself an even more detailed treatment of his material, so that the third volume only introduced the Elizabethan age and a fourth had to be promised to complete the work. As Warton drew nearer to that great poetic age, he became more and more keenly aware of its relation to the two great influences he had been tracing through his earlier volumes, mediæval poetry and the revival of learning. He had shown how well adapted to poetry were the unrestrained imaginings of the mediæval romances and how the commencement of the revival of learning had blighted this first poetical blossoming; he was now to show that this blight was but temporary, or rather, that the conjunction of learning and romance was really a period of fertilization, of which the English renaissance was the fruit. The English renaissance was not however so simple a matter as this, and Warton did not fail to see its complexity. His discussion of this important, but then little understood, movement shows a conception of its remoter causes, its larger outlines, and its minute details that is remarkably accurate and was more illuminating than can now well be imagined, for the period was then one of the most neglected; even its greatest poets were only beginning to come into their own, and the minor ones were all but wholly unknown. It shows also the knowledge of other literatures, the ability to use the comparative method, that has been often mentioned as one of the author's chief claims to originality and permanent value as a critic and historian.

Warton at once connected the revival of classical learning and the renewed interest in Italian literature as factors in the English renaissance, yet he recognized the characteristic influence of each. Since he had discussed the revival of learning in the second volume, he began the third with the study of the influence of Italian literature in England. This influence he did not regard as wholly new, since he had previously recognized Chaucer's pupilage to Italian masters. The imitation of Petrarch by the English sonneteers was, of course, the first

Italian influence to be considered. But closely as Warton connected the influence of Italian literature in England with the revival of learning, his familiarity with mediæval literature showed him that this outburst of sonneteering had roots there also; that while 'intercourse with Italy . . . gave a new turn to our vernacular poetry',¹ the popularity of the new models was partly due to the fact that their English advocates, notably Surrey,² were educated in a court where ideas of chivalry still prevailed, and were inspired by as romantic passions as were the mediæval heroes of romance. The story of Surrey's life loses none of its romantic charm in Warton's telling and serves to introduce and partly to explain Surrey's difference from Wyatt,—his greater spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness.

Warton did not, of course, attempt the impossible task of trying to separate wholly the indirect influence of the revival of the classics which the study of Italian literature introduced into England, from the direct influence of the classics themselves, especially when both were combined in the work of one poet. In the case of Surrey he was able to make a slight distinction and to ascribe his translation of the *Æneid* to classical influence as definitely as he did the sonnets to Italian. His insistence upon the at least equal importance of the *Æneid* was particularly valuable at a time when that poem had been almost entirely overlooked.³ The importance of the translation he based upon the two-fold contribution of the classical renaissance to English poetry. As 'the first composition in blank verse, extant in the English language,' he hailed it as 'a noble attempt to break the bondage of rhyme'⁴—the result of a similar revolt in Italy under the influence of the study and imitation of the classics—and to improve the English versification by the introduction of new models and 'new elegancies of composition.' As a vernacular version of a classical poem he assigned it to the inundation of classical translations that had been steadily enriching the stock of poetical material and acting as a stimulus to creative poetry, that had been making 'the divinities and heroes of pagan antiquity' so familiar that they not only 'decorated every composition' but were

¹*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, p. 1.

²*Ibid.* p. 27. Perhaps because Tottel gave Surrey greater prominence, Warton seems to have considered him the pioneer, and thereby lost the opportunity of correctly explaining the difference between him and Wyatt.

³'I know of no English critic besides [Ascham], who has mentioned Surrey's Virgil, except Bolton, a great reader of old English books.' *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, p. 24, note p.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 24.

upon the lips even of the Merry Wives of Windsor.⁶ It is not surprising to see Warton find the secret of the tremendous vogue of classical stories in the attractions of their unusual fictions for the romance-loving English poet, so that the 'extravaganeies' of these 'fabulous inventions' were imitated before 'their natural beauties,' 'regularity of design and justness of sentiment,'⁷ were perceived.

In the *Mirror for Magistrates* Warton found all the important influences upon the sixteenth century combined in a work that had the added significance of forming a link connecting this tradition with Spenser. Singling out the description of hell in Sackville's *Induction* as the most striking part of the whole, he made a comparative study of its relation to its sources which included Homer, Virgil and Dante, and was a conspicuous example of the comparative method of criticism which he alone of his contemporaries adequately valued⁸ or was able to achieve.⁹ That the *Inferno* was included in the comparison shows too the extent of the historian's scholarship in an age when wide knowledge of Italian was rare, and Dante was held in much less respect than Tasso or Aristo.¹⁰ Here again Warton's taste for mediæval poetry enabled him to appreciate a poet whose predominating characteristics were mediæval,

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 494.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Ritson is perhaps an extreme example. He showed his complete inability even to appreciate the comparative method when, in his *Observations on the three first volumes of the History of English Poetry*, he asked, 'What possible connection is there between the *Divina Comedia*, and the History of English Poetry?' p. 38.

⁹Professor Saintsbury, who never does full justice to Warton, credits Gray alone of English critics of this century with the ability to use the comparative method; but certainly Gray has left less evidence of it than has Warton. *History of Criticism*, III, p. 462.

¹⁰Paget Toynbee's valuable assemblage of references to Dante in the eighteenth century shows at a glance the meagerness of eighteenth century knowledge of Dante, so that Warton appears as the largest contributor to general acquaintance with the *Divine Comedy* before the translation in 1782. *Dante in English Literature from Chaucer to Cary*, 2 vols. New York, 1909.

But Mr. Toynbee is not quite fair to Warton, and does not recognize the qualitative as well as quantitative difference in his criticism.

An anonymous contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1833, in a review of Wright's translation of the *Inferno*, appreciated the relation of Warton's work to the prevailing ignorance of Dante. He said: 'The *Divine Comedy* was still a sealed volume in scholastic libraries, when the two Wartons, who had some life in them during one of the deadest periods of our literature, distinguished themselves by their endeavours to attract to it the attention of the English public. So little was it known, that Thomas Warton introduced an analysis of it in his history of English Poetry.' Vol. 57, p. 420.

and helped him to discover that the *Divine Comedy* had 'sublimity' even in its 'absurdities', and 'originality of invention' in its 'grossest improprieties'.¹¹ He declared that the poem had a classical groundwork decorated with 'many Gothic and extravagant innovations', and pointed out that 'the charms which we so much admire in Dante, do not belong to the Greeks and Romans. They are derived from another origin, and must be traced back to a different stock.'¹²

Warton's method of comparing the ideas of various poets and studying their influence upon one another is altogether different from the 'parallel-passage-and-plagiarism mania'¹³ which seized his contemporaries when they undertook comparisons. In comparing the *Inferno* and Sackville's *Induction*, he sharpened the distinction by a clear exposition of the characteristic merits of each. The power of vivid description of allegorical, or at least of abstract, characters, so that they appear more like real than imaginary personages, he justly considered Sackville's peculiar gift, a gift he passed on to Spenser,¹⁴ and thereby 'greatly enlarged the former narrow bounds of our ideal imagery.'¹⁵

An historian with a marked and indulged curiosity about every field of literature could not, of course, leave Sackville without discussing the classical tragedy in which he had a share, especially when he recognized it as 'perhaps the first specimen in our language of an heroic tale, written in blank verse, divided into acts and scenes, and clothed in all the formalities of a regular tragedy.'¹⁶ And since by the third volume the reader has lost any desire he may once have cherished to hold Warton strictly to his subject, he welcomes each valuable digression. The discussion of *Gorboduc* is justified by its close connection with the revival of classical learning and with the history of the drama.¹⁷ Moreover the comment upon *Gorboduc* as a tragedy is a sound piece of criticism, indicating a theory of tragedy based upon a judicious combination of classical and romantic practice, which one wishes had been more fully developed. When Warton upheld the moral purpose of tragedy, he wished not 'the intermixture of moral sentences,' but 'pathetic and critical situations,' 'force of example,' and 'the effect of the story'; and he insisted that 'sentiment and argument will never supply the place

¹¹*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, p. 241.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 255.

¹³Saintsbury, *Hist. Crit.* III, p. 70. Warton censured this abuse in his *Obs. on the F. Q.* ed. cit. II, p. 1.

¹⁴See also *Obs. F. Q.* II, pp. 101-3.

¹⁵*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, p. 233.

¹⁶*Ibid.* III, p. 355.

¹⁷*Ibid.* p. 372, ff.

of action upon the stage.¹⁸ He required that classical restraint of language be combined with vivid and consistent characterization and importance and complexity of plot, and that all should contribute to dramatic action. Occasional references to Shakespeare show that Warton recognized his 'eternal dominion over the hearts of mankind',¹⁹ and that he condemned his violations of the unities of time and place, defects which the critic says 'he covers by the magic of his poetry.'²⁰ Warton further declared that 'Shakespeare's genius alone' was able 'to triumph and to predominate' over the 'extravagancies' and 'barbarous ideas of [his] times.'²¹

It has been said that Warton explained the popularity and the power of the Italian and classical translations and imitations by the initial appeal of their fictions to the English fondness for stories, which had survived from the mediæval age. But he would not have it thought that the romantic tradition survived only as a taste for extravagant fictions; numerous printed editions of old romances in modernized versions²² proved the vitality of the romances themselves, and the *Nut browne Maide*, considered as a *sixteenth* century poem, showed him that creative power had not wholly declined. This error in date,²⁴ which is easily explained by Warton's arguments for its modernity, is of less significance than his genuine and un-Augustan enthusiasm for the poem. The wide interval that separates Warton from the old school is clearly shown by the contrast between his estimate of the poem and Prior's conventional imitation of it, and Dr. Johnson's opinion of them. Dr. Johnson had sternly condemned the story for its low morality, and said that it 'deserves no imitation', and, finding no merit in the theme, he dismissed Prior's poem as a 'dull and tedious dialogue.'²⁵ Warton, on the other hand, with a far more catholic taste, admired the simplicity, warm sentiment, and skilful construction of the older poem, and deplored the fact that Prior's garbled version had 'misconceived and essentially marred his poet's design.'²⁶

¹⁸*Ibid.* pp. 362-3.

¹⁹*Ibid.* p. 362.

²⁰*Ibid.* p. 358.

²¹*Ibid.* p. 435.

²²*Ibid.* pp. 58, 142.

²³Fairly familiar to eighteenth century readers from Prior's version, *Henry and Emma*, in *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1709, and its inclusion in Capel's *Prolusions*, 1760, and Percy's *Reliques*, 1765.

²⁴He could not have made the mistake had he known the first edition of Arnold's *Chronicle*, (1502?) instead of only the second, 1525.

²⁵*Life of Prior*, Johnson's *Works*, Ed. cit. III, p. 619.

²⁶*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, p. 140.

In considering the Italian, classical and romantic traditions as the dominant influences upon the great poetical revival in Elizabeth's reign, Warton did not by any means overlook such other important influences not primarily literary as the protestant reformation and the new nationalism, nor did he pass over such related subjects as the development of English prose and the rise of criticism; for he was always quick to see the close relation of literature to the environment in which it was produced, and to study the effect of political and religious movements upon it. His historical sense caught the immediate effect of the reformation upon poetry at the same time that his religious instincts and poetical taste were offended by the atrocious verse of the 'mob of religious rhymers, who, from principles of the most unfeigned piety, devoutly laboured to darken the lustre, and enervate the force, of the divine pages.'²⁷ His frequently expressed disgust with many practices of the protestant reformers did not, however, prevent his making a really thorough study of the origins of reformation poetry,—the popular adaptations of psalms of the French free-thinker, Clement Marot, the popularizing of religion, and the need of a substitute for the religious forms abolished by the rigid Calvinists.²⁸ Yet he would have been no true critic if he had not seen that this 'new mode of universal psalmody' was unworthy of the name of poetry, and no true son of the established church if he had not resented the substitution of a bare 'mental intercourse with the deity' for the impressive beauty of church ceremonies. Nor could his keen sense of humour miss the opportunity to expose the absurdity of more than one 'dignified fanatic's divine poetry' by putting it in juxtaposition with an '*ungodlie ballad*' in the same doggerel metre,—from which inevitable comparison the rollicking *Back and side go bare* suffered least.²⁹

While Warton realized that the religious and political ferment of the middle of the sixteenth century was on the whole unfavourable at first to poetry, he found one important new poetic interest growing out of it. The first indication of the awakening of interest in the national history as a subject for poetry he found in Sackville's *Mirror for Magistrates* and its numerous continuations. And it was only by the judicious application of the historical method that the importance of a poem of relatively slight intrinsic value could have been discovered. Warton fully appreciated the added richness that was given to English poetry through the opening up of the field of English history; he realized the value of the mass of material that had long been 'shut up in the Latin

²⁷*Ibid.* III, p. 194.

²⁸*Ibid.* III, pp. 161-205.

²⁹*Ibid.* III, pp. 206-8.

narratives of the monkish annalists,' and placed the *Mirror for Magistrates* near the beginning of that literary movement which produced Drayton's *Heroical Epistles* and Warner's *Albion's England* and culminated in Shakespeare's historical plays. He did not consider the *Mirror for Magistrates* the source of the others, but simply the first 'poetical use of the English chronicles.'³⁰

Warton could not leave the discussion of the English renaissance without at least mentioning that it was not wholly poetical, but that the 'cultivation of an English [prose] style began to be now regarded,'³¹ and that the inevitable result was the rise of conscious and deliberate literary criticism. And it is characteristic that he should have traced the development of English prose to Ascham's desire to show 'how a subject might be treated with grace and propriety in English as well as in Latin,'³¹ and that he should have compared the rise of criticism in England with its earlier development in France and Italy, with which he was really familiar. It is at the same time indicative of his estimation of the function of criticism that he should have feared that, in the absence of critical treatises, while writers were entirely unhampered by canons of taste or rules of correct composition and 'every man indulged his own capriciousness of invention', although poetry gained in variety and flexibility, there was danger that 'selection and discrimination' be 'often overlooked,' that sublimity be mingled with triviality, and that liberty become license.³²

In concluding the third volume with a recapitulation of the tendencies that dominated 'the golden age of English poetry,' Warton showed his just estimation of the contribution from each source, and the modification each underwent in becoming part of the complex whole. This summary is the more significant because it shows distinctly what he considered the essentials of such an age, and therefore implies his explanation of the lack of poetry in his own day. Having always recognized imagination as a first requisite of pure poetry, and realizing, as his pseudo-classical contemporaries did not, that the romantic fictions of the middle ages made as powerful an appeal to the imagination and feelings as the traditions of classical antiquity, and perceiving too that they are not necessarily incompatible, he could show that it was an inestimable gain to the Elizabethan age that it combined the beauties of both, that poetry reached its highest development in England before reason and science had so far advanced upon art that intellectual qualities prevailed over imaginative. The nice balance between two intoler-

³⁰*Ibid.* III, pp. 259-282.

³¹*Ibid.* III, pp. 329-354.

³²*Ibid.* III, p. 499.

able extremes—undisciplined imagination and cold reason—which has been but rarely reached, has seldom been more clearly conceived than by Warton, and is aptly described in the closing words of his description of the great poetic age, ‘when genius was rather directed than governed by judgement, and when taste and learning had so far only disciplined imagination, as to suffer its excesses to pass without censure or controul, for the sake of the beauties to which they were allied.’³³

The fourth volume, which was to have completed the history, although repeatedly promised,³⁴ was never finished. Yet it was never wholly abandoned, and at the time of Warton’s death it was supposed that it could be completed by his brother Joseph from the materials that Thomas had collected. The printer, Daniel Prince, sent the eleven sheets, eighty-eight pages, which he had already printed of the fourth volume, to Dr. Warton, who had collected all his brother’s papers and taken them to Winchester with the expectation of putting them in order and finishing the volume. Unfortunately, however, the historian had never made very careful notes, as a result of his habit of writing directly for the press after he had assembled all his material, trusting much, no doubt, to his memory. There was therefore probably little manuscript that could be used by another. And his brother increased the confusion of the material by cramming the papers all together in disorder.³⁵ Joseph made efforts to complete the work,³⁶ but, not being imbued with equal enthusiasm for the subject nor endowed with equal ability—he complained that the ground left for him to go over was ‘so beaten’!—the task proved too much for him.

The reasons why Warton never finished the history are not hard to find. About the time the third volume was finished, he must have

³³*Ibid.* III, p. 501.

³⁴Letter to Price, Oct. 13, 1781. ‘I have lately been working hard; have made some progress in my fourth volume.’ Mant, I, p. lxxviii.

Prince to Gough, Aug. 4, 1783. ‘Mr. Warton’s ‘History of English Poetry’ will be at press again at Michaelmass next.’ Nichols: *Lit. Anec.* III, p. 696.

In the edition of Milton’s *Minor Poems*, 1785, the speedy publication of the fourth volume was announced.

³⁵*Ibid.* p. 702.

³⁶Joseph Warton to Hayley, March 12, 1792. ‘At any leisure I get busied in finishing the last volume of Mr. Warton’s History of English Poetry, which I have engaged to do—for the booksellers are clamorous to have the book finished (tho’ the ground I am to go over is so beaten) that it may be a complete work.’ Wooll, p. 404.

Prince insinuates that Joseph had the greater incentive to finish the work since a large part of the copy-money had been withheld until it should be finished, and he was already disappointed that his brother had left him no money. Nichols: *Lit. Anec.* III, pp. 702-3.

begun his edition of Milton's *Minor Poems*, the final expression of a life-long attachment to Milton, and in the same year that it was published, he was made poet laureate and Camden Professor of History at Oxford, which honours, though they exacted no arduous duties, helped to distract his energy from the history. Very likely too the fact that in an earlier work he had already discussed Spenser, who would have made a large part in the fourth volume, made him the more willing to turn to a, for him, new field. Therefore, just as he had failed to carry every other of his works to the point of completion originally planned, without ever quite abandoning the history, he probably never took it up with any resolute intention of completing it, after the publication of the third volume.

Some of his contemporaries seem, however, to have found a more specific and less worthy reason for its virtual abandonment. Dr. Percy and his friend Thomas Caldecott, a fellow of New College who knew Warton personally, seem to have entertained the notion that he was influenced by the scurrilous attack of the antiquary Ritson³⁷ to relinquish his plan. Warton's biographer, however, asserts on the authority of 'an intimate friend of Mr. Warton' that he 'neither allowed the justness, nor felt, though he might lament, the keenness of the censure.'³⁸ The following letter to George Steevens shows that he was disposed to treat the attack with contemptuous silence, although he felt he could answer most of the objections.

Dear Sir

I am greatly obliged to you for your Information about the Author of the quarto Pamphlet³⁹ written against me in two Letters, the first dated at Emmanuel College, the second at Hampstead. What a universal Caviller and Corrector! But surely, whatever may be done with a previous and separate piece of criticism, no bookseller will be found absurd enough to contract for a new edition of Shakespeare

³⁷Percy to Caldecott, Aug. 17, 1803. 'I certainly think with you, that the personal abuse of poor mad Ritson was the highest honour he could do me, and can only regret that it deprived us of the ingenious labours of "honest Tom Warton." I assure you it would have had no such influence on me.' Nichols: *Lit. Illus.* VIII, pp. 372-3.

A similar notion seems to have inspired a curious and somewhat obscure caricature printed in London in 1805, which is thus described by Andrew Caldwell in a letter to Percy: Ritson 'is surrounded with carrots and cabbages, and on the ground lies the *Reliques*. A print of poor Warton, with a knife and fork stuck in his belly; the meaning of this I do not understand.' *Ibid.* VIII, p. 62.

³⁸Mant, p. lxxviii. See also Thomas Park's *Advertisement* of his edition of Ritson's *English Songs*. London, 1813.

³⁹Ritson: *Observations on the three first volumes of the History of English Poetry in a familiar letter to the author*, 1782.

after your's.⁴⁰ I could disprove most of his objections were it a matter of any Consequence. To speak to one here, Dr. Farmer suggested to me the Calculation concerning the *Gesta Alexandri* printed by Corsellis, showing that the (MS. burnt) was completed at Priss on a Sunday.⁴¹ I (MS. burnt) told the Pamphlet⁴² makes some way a C(MS. burnt)ge, under the Auspices of Dr. Glyn(-)e. But it (MS. burnt) is too heavy to move much. Wh(MS. burnt) ay, Dean Milles⁴³ was here in (MS. burnt), for a week, I found on my Table on my Return hither, a present of Ritson's Quarto 'with Compliments from the Author.' We will have your new Rowley Anecdotes when we meet in town after Xmas.

I am, Dear Sir, your most faithful humble servant,
T. Warton.

Oxon. Nov. 8, 1782.⁴⁴

Later he was drawn into the controversy that was waged in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and probably even contributed a letter himself.⁴⁵

⁴⁰In April, 1783, Steevens wrote to Warton, 'No less than six editions of Shakespear (including Capell's Notes, with Collins' prolegomena) are now in the mash-tub.' Wooll, p. 398. Ritson projected an edition, but printed only a few sheets in 1787. See *Appendix to Remarks Critical and Illustrative*, 1783.

⁴¹Ritson: *Observations*, etc., p. 15, and *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 8, note h.

⁴²*An Essay on the Evidence . . . relating to the Poems attributed to Rowley*. . . by Matthias, 1783.

⁴³Editor of the Rowley poems, 1782, and defender of their antiquity.

⁴⁴Bodleian MSS. Montagu D. 2 fol. 48.

⁴⁵Nov. 3, 1782. *Lit. Illus.* IV, p. 739. See also *Lit. Anec.* VI, p. 182.

CHAPTER VIII

CRITICAL RECEPTION OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY

It is interesting to see how a work, addressed to two classes of readers, the man of taste and the antiquary, and written by a man who belonged strictly to neither, was received by typical members of each. Both classes of contemporary readers, as will be expected, were out of sympathy with Warton's enthusiasm for his subject and failed to appreciate his valuable new methods. Horace Walpole, who posed as an antiquary, but whose bits of information on ancient matters were decidedly amateurish compared with the strict studies and exact knowledge of the serious antiquarians, hailed the first volume of Warton's history with delight: 'It seems delightfully full of things I love;'¹ but his enthusiasm was scarcely sufficient to survive the reading of it. He granted that the particulars were entertaining, but maintained that the amassing of 'all the parts and learning of four centuries' simply produced the impression 'that those four ages had no parts or learning at all. There is not a gleam of poetry in their compositions between the Scalds and Chaucer.'² The result, so unsatisfactory to a man with Walpole's Augustan taste in poetry, he was inclined to blame, quite unjustly, upon the author's plan rather than upon his own lack of interest in the earlier history of poetry. 'In short,' he wrote to Mason, 'it may be the genealogy of versification with all its intermarriages and anecdotes of the family; but Gray's and your plan might still be executed. I am sorry Mr. Warton has contracted such an affection for his materials, that he seems almost to think that not only Pope but Dryden himself have added few beauties to Chaucer.'³

The second volume wearied him still more. 'I have very near finished Warton,' he wrote, 'but, antiquary as I am, it was a tough achievement. He has dipped into an incredible ocean of dry and obsolete authors of the dark ages, and has brought up more rubbish than riches, but the latter chapters, especially on the progress and revival of the theatre, are more entertaining; however it is very fatiguing to wade through the muddy poetry of three or four centuries that had never a poet.'⁴ With the third volume Walpole's antiquarian pose dropped away completely. If Mr. Warton was going to consider the

¹Letter to Mason, March 23, 1774. Walpole's *Letters*, Ed. cit., VIII, p. 432.

²Letter to Mason, April 7, 1774. *Ibid.*, p. 440.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Letter to Mason, April 18, 1778. *Ibid.* X, pp. 222-23.

Nut Brown Maid better than Prior's imitation, he must feel alarmed at the drift of criticism. He expressed his contempt for Warton's taste in admiring such verse and his judgment in devoting so much attention to those barren centuries in English literary history in no mild terms. But his criticism is a boomerang which returns upon his own inability to appreciate the merits of Warton's history without having discovered the faults which undoubtedly do exist. 'This,' he said, 'is the third immense history of the life of poetry, and still poetry is not yet born, for Spenser will not appear till the fourth tome. I perceive it is the certain fate of an antiquary to become an old fool.'⁵ Mason, in the same spirit, deplored Warton's 'antiquarian mud,' and thought that the best that was to be hoped for the history was that a selection of anecdotes might be made from it.⁶

From the other class of readers came the savage attacks of the antiquarian Ritson, who, approaching Warton's work from the opposite direction, failed as completely as the men of taste to point out its chief faults and to appreciate its timely as well as enduring value. Ritson was 'merely an antiquarian' and a very bad-tempered one: he had no taste for poetry, no interest in literary criticism; he combined, however, a genuine passion for exact research with an unseemly acerbity of temper and virulence of abuse. His *Observations on the three first volumes of the History of English Poetry. In a familiar letter to the author*, published anonymously in 1782, with characteristic affrontery was printed 'in the size of MR. WARTON'S HISTORY' as a 'useful APPENDIX' to 'that celebrated work.' After an introduction full of mock deference and covert contempt, Ritson indicated the line of his attack. 'Whether you have gratified "the reader of taste," by your exertions on this subject, I know not; but of this I am confident, that "the antiquarian" will have greater reason to be dissatisfied with being perplexed or misled, than to thank you for having engaged in a task for which it will appear you have been so little qualified.'⁷

Ritson's accurate antiquarian knowledge, though inspired by the most execrable of bad tempers, was able to collect only one hundred charges of varying degrees of seriousness and importance against Warton's history, certainly a very small number to be gleaned from three quarto volumes, 1761 pages in all. The specific points criticized range from an attack on Warton's excuse for neglecting the Anglo-Saxon period—that it was not connected with the nature and purpose of his

⁵Letter to Mason, March 9, 1781. *Ibid*, XI, p. 412.

⁶Letter to Walpole, March 20, 1781. Quoted from Moulton's *Library of Literary Criticism*, 1910, IV, p. 73.

⁷*Observations*, etc., p. (3).

undertaking (a fault that Warton obviously felt and that Ritson unfairly exaggerated by lifting from its context)—to inaccuracy in dates of manuscripts, inexact quotations, incorrect glosses, and, most serious of all, the charge of plagiarism. The accusation that Warton was not always accurate may be admitted, though with the qualification that his inaccuracy is generally greatly overestimated and was much more frequently due to the inevitable impossibility of ascertaining exactly every date and meaning and manuscript reading in so huge a work and in the infancy of the study of those subjects than to any culpable lack of care on the historian's part.

The charge of plagiarizing is more serious, and, since greater heed is usually given to such an accusation than to the ill-nature that inspired it or to the possibility of oversight in transcribing a large number of references, Warton seems to need a more extended defense at this point. Ritson made two explicit charges of this sort and indulged in a good deal of innuendo. It must be admitted that three notes to Warton's text of Douglas's *Description of May*⁸ correspond to those of Fawkes's edition, published in 1752, and the conclusion that Fawkes was the source of Warton's notes is pretty obvious, but that scarcely justifies Ritson's acrimonious 'each of THESE NOTES, as you [Warton] well know, is STOLEN VERBATUM from the late Mr. Fawkeses Imitation of Douglas.'⁹ And again, when Warton had apparently taken an explanation of the *Hundred Merry Tales*, the supposed source of Beatrice's wit in *Much Ado about Nothing*, as the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, from Steevens's edition of Shakespeare, Ritson's 'I found that, according to your usual and laudable custom, you had been pecking and pilfering from Mr. Steevens's notes upon it,' goes beyond the deserts of the case. It is easily conceivable that references should have been omitted by oversight or accidental loss. The wonder is that there are not many more such accidental omissions. And Warton's evident care to quote the exact references to his sources in his foot-notes makes deliberate dishonesty extremely unlikely.

Ritson's temper is even uglier when he charges Warton with copying a poem from Percy's ballads and then asserting in the notes that he had transcribed it from the original in the British Museum and written the explanations before he knew that it was printed in Percy's collection, giving colour to the accusation by the fact that the same mistakes—including the omission of a stanza—occur in both transcripts.¹⁰ We have here a question of Warton's word against Ritson's, with a

⁸*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, pp. 284, 285, and 286, notes.

⁹*Observations*, p. (24).

¹⁰*Ibid.* p. (5-6).

considerable weight of bad temper on one side and a simple and common explanation, such as is usually accepted at its face value, on the other, and with the possibility of a perfectly plausible explanation that both Percy and Warton received their transcripts from a common copyist.¹¹

After his assembly of one hundred and sixteen mostly petty errors in Warton's history, Ritson concluded with an insulting attack upon the whole, unworthy of a scholar of Ritson's ability and, it would seem, so far overshooting the mark as to destroy its intended effect. 'If your collections had been authentic, though of themselves no history, nor capable, in your hands, of becoming one, they might at least have been useful to some subsequent writer better qualified for the purpose. But we see (as has been here sufficiently proved) you are not to be relied on in a single instance [a generalization for which he at least had given slight basis]; the work being a continued tissue of falsehood from beginning to end. Suffer me, as a friend,—to your subject, at least,—to recommend' that you revise the whole, 'That the work may not remain a monument of disgrace to yourself and your country.'¹²

Although Mant insisted upon Warton's contempt of this attack,¹³ his friends resented it and engaged in a fierce war of words with Ritson in which they showed ability equal to Ritson's without his spleen. Ritson seems never to have abated his abuse of Warton,¹⁴ although after his death he expressed an intention to 'treat his ashes with the reverence I ought possibly to have bestowed on his person;' and a regret that he had been 'introduced, not always in the most serious or respectful manner,' in a recently written work.¹⁵

¹¹It is, of course, too much to suppose that Warton personally made all the research necessary for so huge a work unassisted and in the comparatively short time he must have given to the work, and that not wholly free from other interests. His letters indicate that he received much assistance from obliging friends, e.g. letter to Price, August 18, 1780 (Mant, p. lxxviii) and to Percy, February 22, 1776, *supra*.

¹²*Observations*, p. (48).

¹³Op. cit. I, p. lxxviii.

¹⁴Mant supposed his strictures somewhat softened in the preface to Minot's *Poems* (Anon. 1795) but the references to Warton there seem to me no less hostile, though perhaps somewhat thinly veiled by irony. 'Its author,' he says of the historian, 'confident in great and splendid abilities, would seem to have disdained the too servile task of cultivating the acquaintance of ancient dialect or phraseology, and to have contented himself with publishing, and occasionally attempting to explain, what, it must be evident, he did not himself understand.' Pref. ed. cit., p. ix.

¹⁵Letter to Walker, June 25, 1790. Ritson's *Letters*, ed. Nicolas, London, 1833. I, p. 169. See also Thomas Park's *Advertisement* to his edition of Ritson's *English Songs*, London, 1813.

Although it may appear from the opinions just quoted that Warton failed to please both classes of readers to whom he had appealed in his preface,—that he was not entertaining enough for the man of taste nor accurate enough for the antiquary,—it must not be assumed that the work failed to have even an immediate success.¹⁶ Besides the caution that Walpole was too much an Augustan in his taste for poetry and Ritson too ill-tempered in his hostility toward every other antiquary to be a very competent judge of Warton's history, it is even more important to recognize that Warton had a higher ideal than simply to please either the man of taste, or the antiquary, or both. He aspired to write the history of English poetry, and he took a broader and more comprehensive and at the same time more single view of his subject than either type of reader was able to comprehend. That he aspired to be, and was, something more than the mere man of taste is obvious; that he was something more than a mere antiquary has not always been so fully recognized. The distinction is one he recognized clearly himself,¹⁷ and there were some of his contemporaries who realized that in this work he combined the enthusiasm of a poet, the discrimination of a critic, the research of an antiquary, the broad view of an historian, and the genuine human interest of a teacher, and that it was this rich blending of qualities that made his history transcend its faults and become a 'classic'¹⁸ upon its first appearance. 'This elegant writer,' said the reviewer for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 'already well known to the learned world as a poet, a critic, and an antiquarian, opposite as those characters seem to be, has here in some measure united them all.'¹⁹ The *Monthly Review* not only described the history as a 'capital work, . . . replete with entertainment and erudition,'²⁰ but even showed some appreciation of its less obvious merits: 'It is not Mr. Warton's principal merit, that he investigates his subject with the patience of an antiquary and the acuteness of a critic; from his accurate delineation of character, it is evident, that he has inspected the manners of mankind . . . with the penetrating eye of a philosopher.'²¹ Gibbon appreciated the value of his study of 'the progress of romance, and the state

¹⁶Mant said that he had heard that the copyright was sold for 350£, and that 'such was the confidence of the proprietors in the sale of it, that the impression consisted of 1250 copies.' *Op. cit.*, p. liii.

¹⁷He dismissed Harding's *Chronicle* as 'almost beneath criticism, and fit only for the attention of an antiquary.' *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 127.

¹⁸C. K. Adams: *A Manual of Historical Literature*, 1882, p. 501.

¹⁹1774, Vol. XLIV, p. 370.

²⁰1774, Vol. 50, p. 297.

²¹1782, Vol. 66, p. 162.

of learning, in the middle ages,' which he said were illustrated 'with the taste of a poet, and the minute diligence of an antiquarian.'²²

Sir Walter Scott, who combined some qualities of both the man of taste and the antiquary with a creative imagination that both they and Warton lacked, showed in his appreciation of the spirit of the past for the sake of its share in the reality of the present,²³—a departure from the earlier study of the past for its own sake which marked the antiquary,—a romanticism that seems to emanate from Warton's *History of English Poetry* and its vitalization of the life of the middle ages.²⁴ Scott's criticism of Warton's history is pretty just, except that he could not, of course, quite appreciate Warton's contribution in the way of inaugurating modern methods of criticism. After regretting the neglect of system which he said resulted from the writer's too great interest in the fascinating details of his subject, he concluded, 'Accordingly, Warton's "History of English Poetry" has remained, and will always remain, an immense common-place book of *memoirs to serve for such an history*. No antiquary can open it, without drawing information from a mine which, though dark, is inexhaustible in its treasures; nor will he who reads merely for amusement ever shut it for lack of attaining his end; while both may probably regret the desultory excursions of an author, who wanted only system, and a more rigid attention to minute accuracy, to have perfected the great task he has left incomplete.'²⁵

²²*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Philadelphia 1871, 6 vols. III, p. 624.

²³C. H. Herford, in *The Age of Wordsworth*, London, 1909, distinguishes two types of romantic mediævalism, 'the one pursuing the image of the past as a refuge from reality, the other as portion of it; the mediævalism of Tieck and the mediævalism of Scott.' (Introd. xxiv, note.) He might have added the mediævalism from which they both sprang, which pursued the past for its own sake (and was not properly romantic), the mediævalism of the antiquary, of Thomas Hearne.

²⁴There were of course other large factors in Scott's romanticism and there was little conscious debt to Warton. But there is unquestionably a close resemblance between the two men and in other respects than the one just mentioned, the similarity of their approach to the past, their enthusiastic love of the middle ages, combined with and even depending upon a firm grasp on reality. Their qualities differ more in degree than in kind. Warton and Scott have similar antiquarian interests—more human than scholarly perhaps—similar love for the architectural art of the past, as well as for the life whose monument it is. They had also common unromantic qualities: strong common sense, geniality of temper and love of sociability, tremendous energy, and conservatism in politics, religion and morality.

²⁵Scott: *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 1804. I, p. 11. Quoted from Moulton's *Library of Literary Criticism*, IV, p. 73.

More adequate realization of the value of Warton's history came only as modern scholarly research pursued the path which he had first pointed out, and attained thereby results which over-topped his only because built upon them. But many of his successors have shown the common disposition to 'scorn the base degrees by which they did ascend', and have looked upon but one side of the matter, comparing Warton's achievement in any particular branch of his large subject with their own in a much smaller one. They forget the difficulties that he encountered,—that he had not the inspiration of general interest, that authentic sources were almost inaccessible, that scholarly methods were undefined, that even the mechanical aids of book and manuscript catalogues, bibliographies, and dictionaries were lacking. There is an unfortunate tendency to blame Warton for the defects of his age, for not having accomplished the impossible—not only in his own day, but, as yet, in ours. Two short quotations will show the improved yet still incomplete appreciation of the merits of the history. 'He saw, by anticipation, some of the fruits which the comparative method might be made to yield; and, as a consequence, although he essayed a task too large for any man,²⁶ and achieved what is doubtless an ill-arranged and ill-proportioned fragment, yet he left the impress of his independent thought and of his vigorous grasp upon our literature, and traced the lines upon which its history must be written.'²⁷ 'But Warton's learning was wide, if not exact; and it was not dry learning, but quickened by the spirit of a genuine man of letters. Therefore, in spite of its obsolescence in matters of fact, his history remains readable, as a body of descriptive criticism, or a continuous literary essay.'²⁸

The tendency just mentioned of many modern critics to find fault with Warton's history on the score of lack of system and inaccuracies in detail is criticism beside the point. Even granting that their charges be true,—they are certainly exaggerated,—they detract little from the value of the history in its own day, or its importance in ours. Hazlitt reached the height of folly in this sort of criticism when he said, 'It was his rare good fortune to be enabled to take possession of the field at a period when there was absolutely no competitor in sight,'²⁹ and charged him with indolence, carelessness and ignorance,—criticism which reflects more upon the critic than upon his subject. Its author failed to take any account of Warton's milieu. Looked at with the

²⁶For which he had examples enough in the encyclopedic works of his century.

²⁷Craik: *English Prose*, 1906. Introduction, IV, p. 8.

²⁸Beers: *A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, 1910, p. 205.

²⁹Hazlitt's edition of Warton's *History*, 4 vols. London, 1871. Preface, p. viii.

proper perspective his indolence becomes tremendous energy, his carelessness, scrupulous regard for detail, and his ignorance, astonishing breadth and accuracy of information and surprising felicity of conjecture. The task that Warton undertook was beyond the accomplishment of any other man in that age, and one that few men since have ventured upon, and the emendations that many of the best scholars (of this particular sort) of the last century and a half have been accumulating about Warton's text are far less numerous and important than some of them would have us believe.

Warton may be best defended against the most persistent charges of his critics, those of inaccuracy and indolence, by a brief survey of the sources from which he drew the materials of his history as he indicated them in his foot-notes, showing their great number, their wide range, their authority, and the way he used them. Misleading as figures may be, a few will, I think, be illuminating with respect to the work before me. There are in the notes nearly four thousand references to authorities consulted in the preparation of the history, exclusive of glossarial notes, illustrative passages and cross-references to other poets, and bibliographical notes upon the works under discussion, all of which are very numerous and of course entailed a tremendous amount of work. Of the references thus considered approximately seven hundred are to manuscript sources of information, nearly a thousand to historical or critical works,³⁰—more than fifteen hundred different authorities consulted.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the variety of books included in Warton's citations, 'all such reading as never was read' and much of it now not only superseded but forgotten. I can mention here only a few of those most frequently referred to and most representative of the range of authorities cited, but anyone who will give even a few minutes to the study of the foot-notes in the first editions of the history will have a clearer idea of the difficulties of the task and the merit of the accomplishment. The historical sources include the antiquarians, literary, historical and ecclesiastical, that abounded in the preceding centuries, from Bale and Leland to Tanner and Hearne, from Holinshed and Stowe to Lyttleton and Hume, and from Fox and Spelman to Strype and Oudin; they include glossaries of many languages, those of Herbelot, DuCange and Carpentier, and Hickes; they include histories of foreign as well as English literature, Fauchett, Pasquier, Fontenelle and St. Palaye, among many others for France, Muratori

³⁰See bibliography of sources. A summer spent poring over the venerable tomes that Warton used has increased the writer's respect for his thoroughness.

and Crescembeni for Italy, Bartholin, Pontoppidan, and Mallet for Denmark, and hosts of others that defy classification.³¹

Very naturally it is the historical compilations that are most frequently cited, but always with a discriminating sense of their value; Warton depended on them usually for historical facts merely; his conclusions and interpretations were his own. In the case of many writers whom he has quoted frequently he has left an opinion of the author's work which shows the dependence he placed upon him. The author from whose very numerous editions of old texts he quoted most frequently is Thomas Hearne, 'to whose diligence,' he said, 'even the poetical antiquarian is much obliged, but whose conjectures are generally wrong.'³² Leland he recognized as 'one of the most classical scholars of [his] age.'³³ Of Wood, though he is frequently quoted, I find no further characterization than a reference to 'his usual acrimony.'³⁴ 'Bale's narrow prejudices,' he said, 'are well known.'³⁵ Warton recognized the limitations of Bale's principal work while drawing upon it for facts not elsewhere obtainable: 'This work . . . is not only full of misrepresentations and partialities, arising from his religious prejudices, but of general inaccuracies, proceeding from negligence or misinformation. Even those more antient Lives which he transcribes from Leland's commentary on the same subject, are often interpolated with false facts, and impertinently marked with a misapplied zeal for reformation.'³⁶ The 'circumstantial Hollingshed' he characterized as 'an historian not often remarkable for penetration,'³⁷ though his 'formidable

³¹It will be easier to enumerate the authors whom Warton apparently did not consult, and who, it now appears, might have been valuable, but whom we cannot be certain he did not consult, since he may have found nothing to his purpose. Literary sources that we might expect to find cited but do not, are Reynolds: *Mythomestes*, 1632; Walton: *Lives*, 1740-70; Lloyd: *Dictionarium*, 1670; Winstanley: *Lives*, 1687 (its chief source, Philips's *Theatrum*, is quoted); Blount: *Censura*, 1690, and *De Re Poetica*, 1694; [Jacob]: *Poetical Register*, 1719; and, most curious of all, Dryden's critical essays. Although there are many references to Dryden's plays and poems, there are only two minor citations from the prose, the *Preface of the Fables* (*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, I, p. 416), and *Preface to the Spanish Fryer* (III, p. 448), and one general reference without exact citation (III, p. 443).

³²*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, I, p. 87. Hearne is cited 113 times, from different editions of old texts.

³³*Ibid.* III, p. 160. Leland's five principal works are cited 104 times.

³⁴*Ibid.* III, p. 96. Woods two works are cited 77 times.

³⁵*Ibid.* III, p. 316. 'The Puritans never suspected that they were greater bigots than the papists.' Bale is cited 44 times.

³⁶*Ibid.* III, p. 79.

³⁷*Ibid.* I, p. 232. Holinshed's history is quoted 34 times.

columns³⁸ were full of minute details. He expressed his appreciation of the work of 'the indefatigably inquisitive bishop Tanner,'³⁹ and of the 'manuscript papers of a diligent collector of these fugacious anecdotes,'⁴⁰ Coxeter. Warton was extremely gracious in acknowledging debts to his contemporaries:—'the late ingenious critic,' Percy,⁴¹ 'Monsieur Mallet, a very able and elegant inquirer into the genius and antiquities of the northern nations,'⁴² Tyrwhitt, 'an exact and ingenious critic,'⁴³ 'my late very learned, ingenious, and respected friend, Dr. Borlase,'⁴⁴ 'the reverend and learned doctor Farmer,'⁴⁵ and 'Mr. Price, the Bodleian Librarian, to whose friendship this work is much indebted.'⁴⁶

While Warton availed himself of every accessible source of information, he did not lean unduly upon later and more easily accessible sources. 'I chuse,' he said, passing over a recent memoir, 'to refer to original authorities.'⁴⁷ Again, he blamed himself for depending upon later authorities, feeling that he had thereby fallen into error: 'I take this opportunity of insinuating my suspicions, that I have too closely followed the testimony of Philips, Wood, and Tanner.'⁴⁸ The large number of manuscripts and of early printed books which he quoted with great concern for dates and careful citations of various other editions which he had seen or had found described—he usually discriminates carefully between those he had seen and those he had not, frankly admitting at times that he must quote only at second hand—bear out his statement that he preferred to refer to original sources. His letters to his friends, too, are full of echoes of his quest for copies of rare books, and of his researches in book and manuscript collections in private and public libraries.

This practice of going to original manuscript sources is usually considered today a characteristic of modern scholarship and especially as the method by which modern scholars have surpassed the superficial studies of the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ And the belief is in general correct.

³⁸*Ibid.* III, p. 47.

³⁹*Ibid.* III, p. 429. Tanner is cited 21 times.

⁴⁰*Ibid.* p. 433.

⁴¹*Ibid.* I, Dissertation, I, p. (22). Percy is cited 21 times.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.* III, Dis. III, p. xcii. Tyrwhitt is quoted 11 times.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* I, Diss. I, p. (36) note.

⁴⁵*Ibid.* III, Diss. III, p. iv.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* I, Diss. I, p. (8).

⁴⁷*Ibid.* I, Diss. I, p. (24), note *q*.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* III, p. 293, note *c*.

⁴⁹Bishop Percy's carelessness to preserve the integrity of his ballad MSS. is the stock example of eighteenth century methods.

But it is not often considered how much Warton contributed to introduce and popularize that method in his *History of English Poetry*. Not only the new facts and the possibilities of absolute exactness which he revealed in this way, but his very inaccuracies and misquotations have been a powerful stimulus—to others than Ritson—to the study of old manuscripts. And his calling attention to the wealth of material that lay beyond the reach of the ordinary reader, and even, as in the case of the Gower *Balades*, outside the knowledge of the literary antiquarian, must have been extremely important at a time when general attention was turning toward the treasures of the past.

It cannot be claimed that the result that Warton achieved with all his knowledge, industry, taste, genius, is a perfect history even for the period which it covers. A history of English poetry which will satisfy the scholar's demand for just appreciation of poetical achievement, the historian's demand that the progressive development of poetry shall be portrayed, and which shall, withal, be eminently readable, combining accurate scholarship with literary qualities and popular interest in the best sense,—such a history of English poetry remains to be written. But of the attempts that have been made, the first was not the least effective. It combines in a remarkable degree scholarliness and general interest; a scholarliness remarkably exact for its time, and so accurate in method and general results that errors in detail have been corrected by following its own leading; a general interest that has been wonderfully stimulating to research in special divisions of its field or in related subjects, again in the direction Warton suggested.

The principal contribution made by Warton's history, aside from the facts of literary history which have been discussed in many preceding pages, is in the way of method. He first described the progressive development of poetry, the essential unity of the whole, the relation of part to part and to the whole. It must be admitted of course that in the disproportionate discussion that is given to some aspects of the subject, the relation of part to whole seems to have been lost sight of. It is true that Warton was unable to keep strictly to his subject; he was led aside by his endeavour to treat every aspect fully and then suddenly recalled by a sense of the extent of his plan; he was torn by conflicting desires to treat his subject exhaustively and at the same time broadly and he never succeeded in reconciling that conflict. Romantic love of detail over-mastered classical sense of form but could not obliterate completely his conception of the unity of his whole subject and the continuity of its history. Warton's history was at least and for the first time sufficiently full of the life of poetry to vitalize subsequent study of the subject.

It is only necessary, I think, to recall the fact that Warton was the first to use to any extent not only the historical but also the comparative method. He had shown his clear perception of the close relation between national literatures in his *Observations on the Faerie Queen* twenty years before the first volume of his history appeared. That perception as well as his acquaintance with other literatures had grown during that interval, so that he was able to study mediæval literature with some knowledge and understanding of its essential spirit and of its various modifications and developments in France and Italy, at least, as well as in England, and of the interrelations between them, and to discuss the renaissance in England with an insight such as none of his contemporaries possessed. He did not, to be sure, cover any very considerable portion of his field comparatively; but to have recognized the possibilities of the method, to have shown how it might be used, and to have perceived that only by its use could the history of a national literature be adequately written,—this was of incalculable value in his day, and ours.

The great achievement of Warton's *Observations on the Faerie Queen* was that it established Spenser's reputation on a firm foundation in criticism as well as in poetry and inaugurated a new kind of literary criticism. The *History of English Poetry* contains a number of such achievements. As they have been discussed in detail in the preceding pages, it will be necessary here only to review them. First, of course, should be mentioned the study of mediæval romances, of which, though Warton's theory of origins be inadequate, his understanding of their essential qualities and of their influence upon later literature, is unquestionably penetrating. The studies in the beginning of the drama are almost equally valuable. The discussion of Chaucer is comparable to that of Spenser in the earlier work, and must be considered as contributing greatly to the establishment of that poet's reputation. Warton is certainly as useful and valuable a source for interpretation of Chaucer as the more accurate Tyrwhitt for elucidation of textual difficulties, and here again his work has not been superseded but only continued. The studies of Gower, of Lydgate, of Surrey, of Sackville, and of numberless minors are remarkably illuminating in respect to the quality of the poet's work, his relation to his age, and his contribution to the progress of the whole subject. The digressions on Dante and on the history of criticism in France and Italy have been spoken of as conspicuous examples of comparative study, and as contributing largely to the study of Italian literature. They and the discussion of Scotch poetry and the causes of its difference from English poetry illustrate Warton's growing recognition of the part played by racial characteristics and national temperament in the formation of a national literature.

That Warton's knowledge of literature was not simply an accumulation of 'cumbersome and amorphous learning,'⁵⁰ is shown not only in his comprehension of the relations of part to whole and of the continuous progress of poetry, and his arrangement of his material in general to show that unity and continuity, but it is even more strikingly proved by his ability to turn his knowledge to practical use in determining the period to which a questionable work belonged by the consideration of the literary characteristics of that period and without any technical knowledge of its language. Warton's prompt disposal of the Rowley question meets a practical scholarly test of the best sort in a way that reveals a real mastery of the field.

Judged by the same standards that Warton helped to teach us to apply to literary history, with reference to his inheritance from the past, the influence of the age in which he lived, and the inspiration of his own genius, Warton stands out as easily one of the most important figures of the eighteenth century. He was at the same time the product of his age and of his own genius. From the study of the past he had gained a quickening of the imagination and a sense of that which is enduring and constant in human history as well as a perception of that which changes from age to age; as he belonged to the eighteenth century, he had a strong fund of common sense, clear reasoning powers, an insatiable thirst for knowledge, a wholesome respect for authority; to these, genius enabled him to add poetical insight, rare sympathy, and fresh enthusiasm. These qualities were not always perfectly blended. In particular, the extent of his knowledge often exceeded his ability to reduce it to order; his enthusiasm for a theory sometimes betrayed him into too quick an acceptance or too extended an application; rapidity of composition frequently marred the finished style of which he showed himself at times capable and too often precluded due selection of material. Although Warton was unable to free himself from many of the faults of his age, which he inherited together with its virtues, he added to them many of the conspicuous merits of the next century, which he was able in a remarkable way to anticipate.

⁵⁰Craik: *English Prose*, Introduction, IV, p. 8.

CHAPTER IX

THE POETRY OF AN ANTIQUARY. 1777-1790

Although Warton had apparently abandoned poetry to devote the best years of his life to critical and historical work, the poet was never wholly lost in the scholar; his poetry, though slight, was always his dearest literary offspring. In 1777 he took advantage of his reputation as critic of Spenser and historian of English poetry to collect and publish a small volume of his best verse¹ made up largely of new poems written during the course of more laborious work and showing the influence of his scholarly interests. In this volume of eighty-three pages were published for the first time all of the sonnets but two, most of the odes, including the best ones, *The Grave of King Arthur* and *The Crusade*, and two short pieces, the *Inscription written at a Hermitage, in Anstey Hall, in Warwickshire*, and a *Monody, Written near Stratford on Avon*. Although Dr. Johnson, who disapproved of Warton's poetry even more heartily than he admired his historical work, said of this first edition of his poems, 'This frost has struck them in again,'² the poems were so much admired that another edition³ was published two years later with the addition of a single poem, *The Triumph of Isis*.⁴

¹*Poems A New Edition, with Additions, by Thomas Warton*, London. 1777. The table of contents contains this note, 'The pieces marked with an asterisc were never before printed,' and all but seven of the twenty-five poems are so marked. I am therefore inclined to believe that this was the *first edition* of the poems and that the so-called *third* edition is really the *second*, the *New* in the title of the first being the cause of the confusion. Nathan Drake however, thought, as I once did, that there were two editions in 1777 of which the copy in the British Museum, just described, is the second. *Essays on the Contributors to the Rambler, Adventurer, and Idler*, London 1810, II, p. 174.

²Boswell's *Johnson*, III, p. 158, note.

³*Poems. By Thomas Warton. The Third Edition, corrected*. London, 1779. 97 pages. The volume contained the following advertisement: 'These Poems were collected and published together in 1777. Some of them had before been separately printed, to which other unprinted Pieces were then added. This is the third and a revised Edition of that Collection, with the Addition of one Piece more. March 1, 1779.'

⁴Which Mason had regretted was omitted from the first edition, in a letter to Warton, April 24, 1777. Mant Op. cit. p. xviii.

In 1782 Warton published, but without his name, an eight page pamphlet containing his *Verses on Sir Joshua Reynolds's Painted Window at New College, Oxford*, with this advertisement: 'The following piece was never originally designed for the press, and would not have appeared in public, if it had not been incorrectly circulated in manuscript.' The artist⁵ was delighted with the verses, but with mingled flattery and vanity complained that his own name 'was not hited in, in the body of the poem. If the titlepage should be lost, it will appear to be addressed to Mr. Jervais.'⁶ His request was of course granted, and for 'artist' the poet substituted the name.

In recognition of his merits as a poet and his distinguished abilities as a man of letters in general, Warton was appointed poet laureate on the death of Whitehead in 1785. Contemporary opinion differed as to whether the honour was conferred on the king's own initiative or on the recommendation of Sir Joshua Reynolds.⁷ The appointment was at least unsought, for Warton, although he did not share Gray's contempt for the office,⁸ had deplored the undignified necessity the laureate was under of writing upon occasion and the inevitable triteness of perpetual repetition.⁹ When the office was bestowed upon him, however, he accepted it, and expressed the required conventional flattery as best he could, with much emphasis upon the traditional glories of the past.¹⁰ As might be expected, Warton's laureate odes are the least valuable of his poems; they are the most commonplace and show least of his peculiar poetic gift.

The laureate odes,¹¹ a short inscription,¹² one humorous poem,¹³ and

⁵According to Mant we owe the portrait of Warton painted by Reynolds and now in the Common Room at Trinity College, to his strong friendship for the artist. *Op. cit.* p. lxxxii.

⁶See letter to Warton, May 13, 1782, B. M. Add. MSS. no. 36526, f. 14, printed in Mant's *Memoirs*, p. lxxxii.

⁷Nichols: *Lit. Illus.* VII, p. 468.

⁸Gray had declined the appointment on the death of Cibber, in 1757, and wrote contemptuously to Mason of the office, adding, 'Nevertheless I interest myself a little in the history of it, and rather wish somebody may accept it that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable, or ever had any credit.' Gray's *Works*, ed. cit. II, p. 345.

⁹*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, p. 133.

¹⁰For Southey's praise of Warton's success in giving the laureate odes 'an historical character' see *The Life and Literary Correspondence of Robert Southey*, 6 vols. London, 1850. V, p. 63.

¹¹The *Odes for the New Year*, 1786, 1787, 1788 and the *Odes on his Majesty's*

a considerable number of Latin poems were added to the fourth edition, published in 1789,¹⁴ and Warton's humorous pieces were here included for the first time in a collection of his poems. The poems that had been published separately were also added, so that the edition was for the first time practically complete. A reprint of this edition appeared after Warton's death, in 1791.¹⁵

The poems that belong to Warton's later period, that is, those that appeared for the first time in the collected edition of 1777 and were presumably written after the publication of the *Oxford Sausage*, the laureate odes, and other occasional later poetry, show, as would be expected, a considerable advance over his earlier work in the direction

Birthday for the same years. The *Ode* on the birthday of 1785 was omitted from the 1789 and 1791 editions, but included in Mant's, 1802.

¹²The *Inscription over a calm and clear spring in Blenheim gardens*, which was ascribed to Dr. Phanuel Bacon in *Gent. Mag.*, 1792 although the fact that Warton included it in this edition shows it to be his.

¹³The *Prologue on the old Winchester Playhouse, over the Butcher's Sham-bles* seems not to have been published before.

¹⁴*Poems by Thomas Warton, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. The fourth edition, corrected and enlarged.* ΘΕΟΚΡΙΤΟΥ ΤΑ ΡΩΔΙΑ ΔΡΟΣΟΕΝΤΑ ΚΑΙ Η ΚΑΤΑΠΥΚΝΟΣ ΕΚΕΙΝΗ ΕΠΙΤΑΛΟΣ ΚΕΙΤΑΙ ΤΑΙΣ ΕΙΚΩΝΙΑΣΙ ΤΑΙ ΔΕ ΜΕΛΑΜΦΥΛΛΟΙ ΔΑΦΝΑΙ ΤΙΝ ΠΥΘΙΕ ΠΑΙΑΝ. London . . 1789. xi, 292 pp. This edition is very rare; there is no copy in either the British Museum or Bodleian Library, and the one in the Yale University Library lacks pp. (iii)-iv.

¹⁵*The Poems on various Subjects of Thomas Warton, B.D. Late Fellow of Trinity College, Professor of Poetry, and Camden Professor of History, at Oxford, and Poet Laureate. Now first collected.* London, 1791. 292 pp. It contains the following *Advertisement*. 'A reader of taste will easily perceive, that the ingenious Author of the following Poems was of the School of Spenser and Milton, rather than of Pope.

'In Order to make this Collection of his poetical Works the more complete, to the Poems of a more serious cast, are now first added, several pieces of pleasantry and humour; and also some Latin Poems, written with a true classical Purity, Elegance and Simplicity.'

The standard edition is that published by Mant in two volumes in 1802, *The Poetical Works of the late Thomas Warton, B.D. Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford; and Poet Laureate. Fifth edition, corrected and enlarged. To which are now added Inscriptionum Romanarum Delectus, and an Inaugural Speech as Camden Professor of History, never before published. Together with Memoirs of his Life and Writings; and Notes Critical and Explanatory.* Oxford, 1802. This edition contains six English poems not previously published, and reprints the *Ode from Horace, Book III, Ode 13*, which had been published with Joseph Warton's *Odes* in 1746. The new poems were the ode to *Solitude, at an Inn*, (written in 1769), the *Epitaph on Mr. Head*, the *Ode from Horace, Book III, Ode 18*, and three laureate odes.

of the new movement. They are far less imitative; not only are Pope and Swift largely ignored, but even Milton and the early romanticists, Thomson, Parnell, Young, exert less influence. They begin to show, too, some influence of contemporary romanticists, especially of Gray. They are also more markedly characterized by those peculiar qualities which had appeared in Warton's early work, the love of the past and the love of nature.

Four poems in the volume are significant of Warton's poetical taste; three show that his allegiance to the older English poets was unchanged, and one helps to account for Gray's influence. The *Ode sent to Mr. Upton, on his Edition of the Faerie Queene* expresses his early fondness for 'romantic Spenser's moral page' and his joy in reviving his ancient pagantry, and the sonnet *On King Arthur's Round Table, at Winchester* rejoices that

Spenser's page, that chants in verse sublime
Those Chiefs, shall live, unconscious of decay.

In the *Monody, written near Stratford upon Avon* the thought of the 'bard divine' who made here his 'infant offering' of 'daisies pied' transforms, 'as at the waving of some magic wand', a vision of natural loveliness to a fanciful vision of tragedy. The sonnet *To Mr. Gray*¹⁶ expresses the poet's gratitude

For many a care beguil'd
By the sweet magic of thy soothing lay,
For many a raptur'd thought, and vision wild.

The influence of Gray is strong in one of the most interesting and significant of Warton's later poems, the *Ode Written at Vale-Royal Abbey in Cheshire*. It is apparent throughout the poem, from the form, the elegiac quatrain, to the atmosphere of pensive melancholy which pervades it. The poem begins

As evening slowly spreads his mantle hoar,
No ruder sounds the bounded valley fill,
Than the faint din, from yonder sedgy shore,
Of rushing waters, and the murmuring mill,

and continues with a scene not unlike that with which the elegy opens. But there is an important difference between Gray's poem and Warton's. The former is classical and universal in its application and appeal; the scene might be any village church-yard; the conventional moralizing is exactly the sort which dignified the eighteenth century,

¹⁶In the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* Warton had described Gray as a 'real poet,' 'one who has shewn us that all true genius did not expire with Spenser.' II, p. 113.

and which makes an almost constant appeal both because of its truth and because of the perfect form which Gray gave to it. Warton, however, was describing a particular ruined abbey, and it called up in his mind visions of the past in which he was deeply interested. He delighted to reconstruct the ruined abbey, to recall its departed glories, to dwell on the themes dear to him, its architecture, its learning, its minstrelsy, and its romance.

Here ancient Art her dædal fancies play'd
In the quaint mazes of the crisped roof;
In mellow glooms the speaking pane array'd,
And rang'd the cluster'd column, massy proof.

Here Learning, guarded from a barbarous age,
Hover'd awhile, nor dar'd attempt the day;
But patient trac'd upon the pictured page
The holy legend, or heroic lay.

Hither the solitary minstrel came
An honour'd guest, while the grim evening sky
Hung lowering, and around the social flame
Tun'd his bold harp to tales of chivalry.

Both poets portray the transitoriness of human life; Gray advances from the description of an evening scene to contemplation of the dignity and worth of rustic life; Warton to the celebration of vanished glories prized even in an ampler age.

This love of the past, this revival of mediæval glories especially, which occasionally showed in the earlier poems and appeared more strongly in many of his later ones, connects Warton most closely with the romantic movement and constitutes his most original contribution to it. His mediæval poems have also a close relation to his other literary work; they give expression to the same master passion that urged him, as critic and historian, to exploit the beauties of Spenser and the forgotten poets of early English literature. In two of Warton's best and most characteristic odes, he concerned himself wholly with the past. These very romantic poems are *The Crusade* and the *Grave of King Arthur*. The first purports to be the song that Richard Cœur de Leon and Blondel de Nesle composed together, by which the minstrel was able to discover his master in prison. The poem has a fine swing, from the beginning of the song

"Syrian virgins, wail and weep,
English Richard ploughs the deep!"

to the defiant close,—

"We bid those spectre-shapes avaunt,
Ashtaroth, and Termagaunt!

With many a demon, pale of hue,
 Doom'd to drink the bitter dew
 That drops from Macon's sooty tree,
 Mid the dread grove of ebony.
 Nor magic charms, nor fiends of hell,
 The christian's holy courage quell.
 Salem, in ancient majesty
 Arise, and lift thee to the sky!
 Soon on thy battlements divine
 Shall wave the badge of Constantine.
 Ye Barons, to the sun unfold
 Our Cross with crimson wove and gold!"

The favourite ode, however, will always be *The Grave of King Arthur*, in which a story of the national British hero of romance is skilfully set into a brilliant framework of mediæval splendour. Warton explained in a short preface that the story was adapted from the Chronicle of Glastonbury and dealt with a Welsh tradition that Arthur was not carried away to Avalon after the battle of Camlan but was received by monks and buried before the high altar in Glastonbury Abbey. This story, told to Henry II by Welsh bards at Cilgarran Castle, induced him to go to the abbey, find the grave, and, as the ode has it, establish a chantry at its shrine. The description of the feast with which the poem opens is gorgeously romantic, and splendidly suggests the great mediævalist of the next century, Sir Walter Scott. Warton's richness and harmony of diction, his stirring and vigorous appeal to the imagination were continued, but scarcely eclipsed, in the poems of his great successor.

Stately the feast, and high the cheer:
 Girt with many an armed peer,
 And canopied with golden pall,
 Amid CILGARRAN'S castle hall,
 Sublime in formidable state,
 And warlike splendour, Henry sate;
 Prepar'd to stain the briny flood
 Of Shannon's lakes with rebel blood.
 Illumining the vaulted roof,
 A thousand torches flam'd aloof:
 From massy cups, with golden gleam
 Sparkled the red metheglin's stream:
 To grace the gorgeous festival,
 Along the lofty-window'd hall,
 The storied tapestry was hung:
 With minstrelsy the rafters rung
 Of harps, that with reflected light

From the proud gallery glitter'd bright:
 While gifted bards, a rival throng,
 (From distant Mona, nurse of song,
 From Teivi, fring'd with umbrage brown,
 From Elvy's vale, and Cader's crown,
 From many a shaggy precipice
 That shade Ierne's hoarse abyss,
 And many a sunless solitude
 Of Radnor's inmost mountains rude,)
 To crown the banquet's solemn close,
 Themes of British glory chose.

Equally romantic, and with the mystic charm of an earlier age is the minstrel's song of the death of Arthur,

"O'er Cornwall's cliffs the tempest roar'd,
 High the screaming sea-mew soar'd;
 On Tintagel's topmost tower
 Darksome fell the sleety shower;
 Round the rough castle shrilly sung
 The whirling blast, and wildly flung
 On each tall rampart's thundering side
 The surges of the tumbling tide:
 When Arthur rang'd his red-cross ranks
 On conscious Camlan's crimson'd banks:
 By Mordred's faithless guile decreed
 Benath a Saxon spear to bleed!
 Yet in vain a paynim foe
 Arm'd with fate the mighty blow;
 For when he fell, an elfin queen,
 All in secret, and unseen,
 O'er the fainting hero threw
 Her mantle of ambrosial blue;
 And bade her spirits bear him far,
 In Merlin's agate-axled car,
 To her green isle's enamell'd steep,
 Far in the navel of the deep.

Warton's love of the past was the inspiration also of three of his sonnets. Two were suggested by relics of the early history of England: one by King Arthur's Round Table, hanging in the old Norman castle at Winchester, and the other by the mysterious monument of 'wondrous origine' unknown at Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain.

The third of the mediæval group, the most interesting of Warton's sonnets, if not the most interesting of all his poems because it affords a characteristic glimpse of the poet-scholar, is the one *Written in a Blank Leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon*. It has for its subject the delightful, the

æsthetic, side of antiquarian study. That aspect made to Warton an appeal quite as strong as the scholarly one; it was to him an influence as potent in poetry and art as the other was in history and scholarship. The antiquary has never had a better defense and justification than the following lines:—

Deem not, devoid of elegance, the Sage,
By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguil'd,
Of painful pedantry the poring child;
Who turns, of these proud domes, th' historic page,
Now sunk by Time, and Henry's fiercer rage.
Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smil'd
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
His thoughts, on themes, unclassic falsely stil'd,
Intent. While cloister'd Piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictur'd stores.
Nor rough, nor barren, are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strown with flowers.

The same note of interest in the past is struck rather frequently, but never so forcibly, in his last poems, the laureate odes. Aside from this element, the odes have very little merit indeed. They are dignified, conventional, and often perfunctory. Warton was not interested in contemporary events, and George III made no great imaginative appeal; therefore Warton, like many another laureate, took refuge in singing the glories of English heroes of the past, of Alfred and the British legacy of liberty; of William Conqueror and the barons who obtained Magna Charta; of Edward and the victories in France; and in lauding his great predecessors, the laureates of England.

These celebrations of ancient days, together with Warton's neglect of the ostensible subjects of his odes, were cleverly ridiculed by 'Peter Pindar',¹⁷ a poet whose coarse but frequently humorous satires were more successful than his serious verse. In *Ode upon Ode* he parodied Warton's celebration of the past; in *An Expostulatory Epistle from*

¹⁷The pseudonym of John Wolcott. 'Peter Pindar' was not, however, the only satirist of the laureate odes. Edward Forster, a merchant with considerable interest in literature, sent the following parody, or 'abridgment', of the *New Year's Ode* for 1788 to Gough,

Old Windsor still stands on a hill,
And smiles amid her martial airs,
May Englishmen still cock their hats,
And Frenchmen humbly pull off theirs.

Nichols: *Lit. Illus.* V, p. 289.

Brother Peter to Brother Tom, derided his neglect of the present, and in his *Advice to the Future Laureat*, written after the death of Warton, he pointed with some cleverness to his learning as the cause of his ill success as a laureate.

TOM prov'd unequal to the Laureat's place;
 Luckless, he warbled with an Attic Grace:
 The language was not understood at Court,
 Where bow and curt'sy, grin and shrug, resort;
 Sorrow for sickness, joy for health, so civil;
 And love, that wish'd each other to the devil!

TOM was a scholar—luckless wight!
 Lodg'd with old manners in a musty college;
 He knew not that a Palace hated knowledge,
 And deem'd it pedantry to spell and write.
 TOM heard of royal libraries, indeed,
 And, weakly, fancied that the books were *read*.¹⁸

The second important characteristic of Warton's poetry, the interest in natural scenes as the subject of poetry, which had been in his early period largely coloured by the influence of Milton and Spenser, was equally conspicuous in his later work. In the later poems, however, although he justified his selection of such subjects from the practice of these favourite poets, it is pretty evident that he was painting directly from nature. The following short passage from the ode on *The First of April* illustrates the closeness of Warton's observation of simple details which the pseudo-classicist would have thought beneath the notice of a poet,—

Scant along the ridgy land
 The beans their new-born ranks expand:
 The fresh-turn'd soil with tender blades
 Thinly the sprouting barley shades:
 Fringing the forest's devious edge,
 Half rob'd appears the hawthorn hedge;
 Or to the distant eye displays
 Weakly green its budding sprays.

The modernity of Warton's poetry in which the rustic delights of simple life are celebrated was attested by the fact that his *Hamlet, an Ode written in Whichwood Forest*, was republished in 1859 with fourteen etchings by Birket Foster, a popular engraver, who made illustrations for editions of Milton, Goldsmith, Scott and Wordsworth, and that a second edition was called for in 1876. Yet for all its 'softness' and 'sweetness', the poem is not one of Warton's best efforts.

¹⁸Wolcott's *Works*, I, p. 382; II, pp. 61, and 451 ff.

In two sonnets Warton shows an ability to use the sonnet for that combination of observation of nature and personal reflection¹⁹ which prevailed in the poetry of the next century; they are as reactionary in the direction of the return to nature as the mediæval sonnets were in that of the return to the past. One of these is a study of nature and mood, in the furtherance of which the poet assumed the contrast between the hopeful and the disappointed lover. It is apparent that at least the changeful Surrey landscape was real, whatever the state of feelings in which it was viewed.

While summer-suns o'er the gay prospect play'd,
Through Surry's verdant scenes, where Epsom spreads
Mid intermingling elms her flowery meads,
And Hascombe's hill, in towering groves array'd,
Rear'd its romantic steep, with mind serene,
I journey'd blithe. Full pensive I return'd;
For now my breast with hopeless passion burn'd,
Wet with hoar mists appear'd the gaudy scene,
Which late in careless indolence I pass'd;
And Autumn all around those hues had cast
Where past delight my recent grief might trace.
Sad change, that Nature a congenial gloom
Should wear, when most, my cheerless mood to chase,
I wish'd her green attire, and wonted bloom!

The second nature sonnet, *To the River Lodon*, is even more interesting intrinsically as well as historically. Although one is seldom justified in interpreting poetry biographically, and though Warton was extremely reticent, I cannot but find in this sonnet something of that personal note which was characteristic of the new poetry. It is in the mood of melancholy reflection upon a natural scene that was so congenial a vein to Warton's pupil, William Lisle Bowles.

Ah! what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crown'd,
And thought my way was all thro' fairy ground,

¹⁹Professor Saintsbury has overlooked Warton in considering Bowles as 'the first, for more than a century, to perceive its (the sonnet's) double fitness for introspection and for outlook; to combine description with sentiment in the new poetical way,' where he is accurately describing Warton's power. Prof. Saintsbury's omission of Warton among the *Lesser Poets of the Later Eighteenth Century* in the latest volume of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (vol. XI, 1914) is one of the most conspicuous omissions in that history; and it is the more singular and deplorable since he has included such less important poets as Anstey, Bellamy, Boyse, Cambridge, Croxall, Fawkes, Mendez, Thompson and Woty.

Beneath thy azure sky, and golden sun:
 Where first my Muse to lisp her notes begun!
 While pensive Memory traces back the round,
 Which fills the varied interval between;
 Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.
 Sweet native stream! those skies and suns so pure
 No more return, to cheer my evening road!
 Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure,
 Nor useless, all my vacant days have flow'd,
 From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature;
 Nor with the Muse's laurel unbestow'd.

Closely akin to these nature poems are those that celebrate the joys of rustic life, poems that, still echoing Milton, stand between *The Deserted Village* and *The Task*. Of these the *Inscription in a Hermitage* is the most Miltonic in its praise of studious solitude, but the poet's joy in the blackbird's 'artless trill', the wren's 'mossy nest', his concern to count 'every opening primrose', to guide 'fantastic ivy's gadding spray' show the close observer and real lover of nature. In the *Ode to Solitude, at an Inn*,²⁰ the genial poet shows a keen enjoyment of a solitude shared with nature,—

Then was loneliness to me
 Best and true society,—

but an equal impatience with the unrelieved solitude of an inn,—

Here all inelegant and rude
 Thy presence is, sweet Solitude.

The *Sonnet Written after seeing Wilton-House* perhaps belongs in this group; it affords an imaginative variation of Johnson's and Goldsmith's theme that

Our own felicity we make or find.²¹

Warton celebrates the 'pleasure of imagination,' the power of 'Fancy' to

Bid the green landskip's vernal beauty bloom
 And in bright trophies clothe the twilight wall,

a sentiment as characteristic of the author as it is remote from the moralizing of those sturdy classicists.

Reflection and sentiment have got the better of nature in two odes that, although popular with Warton's contemporaries, fail to move the

²⁰Written May 15, 1769, between Thetford and Ely, see Warton's manuscript copy-books belonging to Miss Catherine Lee.

²¹From the lines added by Johnson to Goldsmith's *Traveller*.

modern reader. The ode *To Sleep* is reminiscent of Young; it invokes sleep to assuage grief, to 'calm this tempest of my boiling blood.' *The Suicide*, the favourite ode of many contemporary readers,²² has fallen into obscurity in spite of, or perhaps because of, its representation of austere virtue triumphing over weak sentimentality. The most interesting feature of the poem now, at least, is the vivid portrayal of nature in a forbidding mood as the background for the sombre theme.

Beneath the beech, whose branches bare,
Smit with the lightning's livid glare,
O'erhang the craggy road,
And whistle hollow as they wave;
Within a solitary grave,
A Slayer of himself holds his accurs'd abode.

Lower'd the grim morn, in murky dies
Damp mists involv'd the scowling skies,
And dimm'd the struggling day;
As by the brook, that ling'ring laves
Yon rush-grown moor with sable waves,
Full of the dark resolve he took his sullen way.

Classical characteristics are not so obvious in Warton's poetry as love of the past and of nature. Although it is difficult to point out particular instances of classical influence in his poetry, the careful reader gains from the whole a definite impression that the writer was thoroughly familiar with the best classical poetry and alive to its characteristic beauties. Mant, the editor of Warton's poems, painstakingly pointed out a number of parallels to passages from such classical poets as Theocritus and Pindar, Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Lucretius. Some few of the poems were, indeed, frank imitations from Horace and Theocritus. But Warton's classicism is not so clearly manifested in imitations from classical poetry or allusions to it as in his recognition of the fact that there is no inevitable antipathy between the classical spirit and 'Gothic' poetry; that they have in common that imaginative quality which is a distinguishing characteristic of the mediæval romances and which the poets of a pseudo-classical age lost by too close an adherence to the form instead of an independent recognition of the spirit of classical poetry. Much of Warton's own poetry, therefore, dealt with mediæval subjects with the deliberate purpose of restoring by that means this essential quality of great poetry which had disappeared in an age of reason.

²²See Mant, *Op. cit.* p. clii; *Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers*, New York, 1856, p. 134; Drake's *Essays*, V, p. 186; Brydges's *Censura Literaria*, London, 1807, IV, p. 274; *Critical Review*, XLIV, p. 111.

Because he recognized the close relation between the mediæval and the classical spirit, Warton distinctly resented, in the sonnet on Dugdale's *Monasticon*, the designation of antiquarian studies as 'unclassic'. And in the *Verses on Sir Joshua Reynolds's Painted Window* he pointed out the possibility of a relation between the spirit of the middle ages and that of classical antiquity, as illustrated, in this instance, by their application to ecclesiastical architecture. Reynolds, as a typical representative of the eighteenth century school of art, saw an incompatibility between the 'softer touch', the 'chaste design', the 'just proportion', and the 'faultless forms of elegance and grace' of classical art; and the 'vaulted dome' and 'fretted shrines', the 'hues romantic' that 'ting'd the gorgeous pane',—the 'Gothic art' of ancient magnificence; the acceptance of one meant for him the denial of the other. Not so with Warton, whose feeling was all for their essential unity.

The common suggestion that Warton's profession of conversion to the classical school of art, his profession that he had been

For long, enamour'd of a barbarous age,
A faithless truant to the classic page,

was probably not quite whole-hearted and did not even deceive the friend to whom it was addressed, does not reveal the full significance of the poem. Its importance in this connection is neither its generous recognition of the beauties of Attic art, nor even the more extended and sympathetic description of the magic of Gothic art, but the suggestion of the possibility of combining classical and mediæval ideals to the advantage of both. With a just sense of their characteristic beauties, the greater naturalness and universality of one, the stronger appeal to the imagination of the other, Warton realized that in art, as in poetry, perfection lay in their union, and therefore he proposed that the great classical artist should

. . . add new lustre to religious light:
Not of its pomp to strip this ancient shrine,
But bid that pomp with purer radiance shine:
With arts unknown before, to reconcile
The willing Graces to the Gothic pile.

The immediate and later reception of Warton's poetry indicates that it belongs much more to the new than to the old school. Johnson and Hazlitt may fairly be taken as typical critics of the two schools: the former could see no merit in the performance of his friend; the latter could not praise it too highly. Dr. Johnson was repelled by Warton's enthusiasm for the past; he could appreciate the benefits to be derived from the study of antiquities in illuminating the history and progress

of mankind,²⁰ but he had no sympathy with Warton's enthusiasm for the intrinsic beauties of old literature and art, nor with his attempt to reëmbodify something of their spirit and charm in modern poetry; he saw in his poetry only strangeness of language and form, or at best, revival of what was not worth reviving. Although he protested that he still loved the fellow dearly for all he laughed at him, he wrecked his friendship with Warton by ridiculing his verse thus,—

Wheresoe'er I turn my view,
All is strange, yet nothing new;
Endless labour all along,
Endless labour to be wrong;
Phrase that time has flung away;
Uncouth words in disarray,
Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet,
Ode, and elegy, and sonnet.²¹

Hazlitt, on the other hand, although disposed to blame Warton for the defects of his age in scholarly method, repeatedly acclaimed him a 'man of taste and genius',²² 'a poet and a scholar, studious with ease, learned without affectation',²³ and 'the author of some of the finest sonnets in the language',²⁴—praise which accords well with Warton's vogue among the poets who were Hazlitt's contemporaries.

Interesting as Warton's poetry is in showing his own development from nearly pseudo-classical to pretty romantic ideals, and valuable as much of it is intrinsically, its greatest importance is to the student of literary history as a factor in the development of the new movement. The influence of the romantic poetry of this laureate poet can scarcely be, and certainly has not been, overestimated, though it has not been altogether overlooked. 'If any man may be called the father of the present race', wrote Southey in the *Quarterly* in 1824, 'it is Thomas Warton, a scholar by profession, an antiquary and a poet by choice'.²⁵ Southey mentioned Bampfylde and Russell as belonging to the school of

²⁰See *Ramblers* 83 and 154, Johnson's *Works*, ed. cit. I, p. 386 and II, p. 155, and *Idler* 85, *ibid.* II, p. 633.

²¹Boswell's *Johnson*, III, p. 158.

²²*Critical List of Authors*, from *Select British Poets*, London 1824, p. xii.

²³*Lectures on the English Poets*, Lecture VI, Hazlitt's *Works*, ed. Waller and Glover, London 1904, V, p. 120.

²⁴*Ibid.* See also his essay on *Coleridge's Literary Life* from *Edinburgh Review*, XXVIII, *Works*, ed. cit. X, p. 138 where he says he prefers them 'to Wordsworth's, and indeed to any Sonnets in the language'; *On Milton's Sonnets*, *Table Talk*, Essay XVIII, *Works*, VI, 175, and *Critical List of Authors* as above.

²⁵XXXI, p. 289.

Warton,²⁶ the 'true English school';²⁵ to them he should have added also Headley and Bowles. This little group of young poets who, if they were not drawn into poetry by the 'magnetism of Tom Warton'²⁷ were at least strongly influenced by him to write nature poetry of the new type, and to become also sonneteers. They form the slender thread that connects him with the major romantic poets, especially with Coleridge and Wordsworth.

There is no evidence of direct connection between Bampfylde and Warton. Bampfylde was a Cambridge man who published his first volume of verse, *Sixteen Sonnets*, the year after Warton's first collection of poems appeared.²⁸ However, his somewhat Miltonic diction, his power of realistic description, and his sincerity of feeling²⁹ suggest Warton's verse and justify assigning him to that school. The other three poets were personally attached to Warton; Russell and Bowles were students at Winchester, where they were under the influence of both the Wartons and whence Russell proceeded to New College in 1782, while Bowles and Headley chose Warton's college. All of them published sonnets and other verse of the new sort during Warton's lifetime, and Russell's posthumous volume³⁰ was dedicated to Warton. Of the group Headley was perhaps most obviously influenced by Warton, but Bowles's debt, if possibly slighter, is at the same time historically most important because he, more directly at least than they, influenced later poets. Headley has not only his master's appreciation of nature and his love of describing it and reflecting upon it, but also his interest in the past, in Gothic ruins,

²⁶Two minor poets of Warton's group were John Bennet, a young journeyman shoemaker, son of the parish clerk at Woodstock, who, with Warton's encouragement attained such proficiency that his volume of *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1774, was favourably noticed in the *Critical Review* (XXXVII, p. 473); and William Benwell, a friend and contemporary of Headley's at Trinity, where he, too, was encouraged by Warton. His *Poems, Odes, Prologues, and Epilogues* etc. was published eight years after his death, in 1804.

²⁷Herbert Croft complained to Nichols, May 15, 1786, (*Lit Illus.* V, p. 210) that 'The magnetism of Tom Warton draws many a youth into rhymes and loose stockings, who had better be thinking of prose and propriety; and so it is with his brother Joe. At school I remember we thought we must necessarily be fine fellows if we were but as absent and as dirty as the Adelphi of poetry.'

²⁸S. E. Brydges: *Autobiography, Times, Opinions and Contemporaries*. 2 vols. London 1834, II, p. 257; *Dict Nat. Biog.* art. Bampfylde; and Southey's *Specimens of the Later English Poets*. 3 vols. London 1807, III, p. 434, where are also some of his poems. Three of his sonnets are included in Main's *A Treasury of English Sonnets*, Manchester, 1880, p. 393 ff.

²⁹There is more pathos in Bampfylde's poems than in Warton's.

³⁰*Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems*, Oxford, 1789.

and in ancient poetry.³¹ Bowles's pensive love of nature and his tender and often melancholy sentiment are the qualities in which he most resembles his master and which were most admired by his contemporaries. The most striking example of Warton's influence upon the later romantic poets is through Bowles's *Sonnet to the River Itchin*, which obviously imitates Warton's *To the River Lodon*, and as obviously suggested Coleridge's *To the River Otter*, while Wordsworth's sequence on the River Duddon comes at once to mind as kindred in feeling. In general, of course, the admiration of these two poets for their less gifted friend and his influence upon them are well recognized facts of literary history.³²

Warton's influence upon the later poets was not confined however to poems of nature and reflection; his chief contribution to the romantic movement was the revival of the spirit of the past, a spirit which found its fullest poetical expression in the poetry of Walter Scott. Even Bowles and Wordsworth, who are most nearly in the other line of romantic development that passed through Warton, had also an interest in mediæval subjects that must be attributed, at least indirectly, to his influence.³³ Scott's poetry, of course, represents the flowering of the Gothic and mediæval qualities which were present in a less perfect form in one group of Warton's poems. The similarity of temper and interests in the two men, and Scott's familiarity with Warton's work show the

³¹The title, at least, of Headley's *Sonnet . . . Written in a blank leaf of Sir William Davenant's Gondibert* is obviously suggested by Warton's similar sonnet in *Dugdale's Monasticon*. His *Verses Written on a Winter's Night*, which begins,—

Who heeds it when the lightning's forked gleam
The rifted towers of old Cilgarran strikes,

the lines *Written amidst ruins of Broomholm Priory, in Norfolk*, and the *Ode to Chatterton*, all have mediæval touches that inevitably suggest Warton. The origin of *Imitations of Old Welsh Poetry* in Ossianic prose is evident. . . . The closing lines of *On a fragment of some verses written by a Lady in praise of solitude*, beautifully develop the theme of Warton's seventh sonnet, (quoted above p. 136) and a slight verbal resemblance further indicates this source. In Headley's principal work, the *Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry*, (1st ed. 1787) the influence of his master's interest in early literature is apparent enough.

³²See Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Shawcross, Oxford 1907, 2 vols. I, p. 7 ff.; J. D. Campbell: *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, London, 1896, p. 17 ff.

³³Among Bowles's poems of mediæval interest are his sonnets on *Woodspring Abbey*, 1836, and on *Lacock Nunnery*, *The Last Song of Camoens*, *The Harp of Hoel* and *The Grave of the Last Saxon*. Wordsworth's mediæval poems include sonnets on *Canute* and *Alfred*, the *Monastery of Old Bangor*, *Crusades*, *Richard I*, *Danish Conquests*, *At Furness Abbey*, *Iona*, and the *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, *The Horn of Egremont Castle*, and one that inevitably recalls Warton, lines *Written in a Blank Leaf of Macpherson's Ossian*.

influence of Warton upon the younger poet as certainly as such things can be shown. Quotations from Warton appear in the chapter headings of his works and upon the title-page of his *Scottish Minstrelsy*,—

The songs, to savage virtue dear,
That won of yore the public ear!
Ere Polity, sedate and sage,
Had quench'd the fires of feudal rage.

Therefore, while it would doubtless be too much to claim for Warton the whole credit for inspiring in Scott the enthusiasm for the past which characterizes his stirring mediæval poems; for beginning and passing on to Wordsworth by way of Bowles the meditative description of simple natural objects; or for beginning the sonnet revival,³⁴ it is only just to say that he both represented and furthered to an important extent these tendencies incipient in eighteenth century poetry and dominant in the poetry of the next century, in the romantic triumph.

³⁴T. H. Ward does make exactly this claim for Warton in his introduction to his poetry in *English Poets*, III, p. 383.

CHAPTER X.

THE ANTIQUARY.

Interest in the past may well be called Warton's master passion; by turns it dominated, inspired, enriched his literary work. It prompted him to attempt a history of English poetry; it was at least partly the source of the historical method of literary criticism which he introduced into the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* and the *History*; and it gave to his poetry a new theme and a new interest. It produced also some work of a strictly antiquarian character and filled the notes of his history of poetry with comments on all sorts of antiquities—numismatics, topography, diplomatics, and above all, architecture. Upon these distinctly antiquarian subjects, as well as on literature, he was an authority of no mean importance, one apt to be consulted in important disputes among antiquarians.¹ One of his earliest publications was strictly antiquarian in character, *A Description of the City, College & Cathedral of Winchester. The whole illustrated with . . . particulars, collected from a manuscript of A. Wood, etc.* The title is a sufficient description of its character. The work was published without date in 1750. It was reprinted in 1857 when Sir Thomas Phillips printed privately at Middle

¹See correspondence with Gough anent the so-called Winchester coin. *Lit. Anec.* VI, p. 177 ff. notes.

An unpublished letter to Philip Morant, the author of *The History and the Antiquities of the County of Essex* (1760-80) shows that he was always glad to put the result of his incidental studies at the service of his avowedly antiquarian friends.

Rev. Sir,

If the Particulars in the enclosed Paper, relating to *Navestock in Ongar Hundred*, Co. Essex, have not come to your knowledge, I flatter myself you will excuse this trouble. They are intended for the next Part of your *Antiquities of Essex*. You may be satisfied that the Account is authentic; but if you should be pleased to make use of it, I will beg you not to mention my Name, but only to note at the bottom of the Page, that the Information was received from Trinity College Oxford. I heartily wish you Success in your very useful Researches, & am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

Tho. Warton,

Fellow of Trin. Coll. Oxon.

Oxon. Jun. 8, 1763.

British Museum Additional MSS. 37222, f. 174.

Hill from Warton's 'own printed copy' in his possession. *Thomas Warton's Notes and Corrections to his History of Winchester College, and Cathedral printed in 1750.*

For all of Warton's antiquarian enthusiasm and reputation he was never without a sense of humour; he saw the absurdities as well as the value of delving in the past, and was always willing to poke sly fun at a 'mere antiquarian', even at himself in that rôle. Of such a character, but additionally interesting for its humorous ridicule of guide books and of university customs, is a book published without date in 1760 and called *A Companion to the Guide, and a Guide to the Companion: being a Complete Supplement to all the Accounts of Oxford hitherto published. Containing, An accurate Description of several Halls, Libraries, Schools, Public Edifices, Busts, Statues, Antiquities, Hieroglyphics, Seats, Gardens, and other Curiosities, omitted or misrepresented, by Wood, Hearn, Salmon, Prince, Pointer, and other eminent Topographers, Chronologers, Antiquarians, and Historians. The Whole interspersed with Original Anecdotes, and interesting Discoveries, occasionally resulting from the Subject. And embellished with perspective Views and Elevations, neatly engraved.* This ridiculous pamphlet, in which Warton with apparent seriousness tells all sorts of nonsense about his collegiate city, was extremely popular and went through many editions, all unowned by the author.² The mock-serious continuation of the antiquarian dispute over the derivation and meaning of the name Oxford, which Warton affected to settle by emending the reputed Roman name, *Bellositum*, to *Bullositum*, and by citing many similar names in the vicinity as evidence of its correctness, is a good example of his way of burlesquing antiquarian pedantry.

The favourite antiquarian subject of local antiquities and parochial history at one time claimed his attention and led him to write a history of his parish of Kiddington, which he hoped might some day be included in a complete history of Oxfordshire, but which should at least serve to illustrate his idea of how such a history should be written. Twenty copies only of this *Specimen of a Parochial History of Oxfordshire* were printed in the winter of 1781-2 for presents to his antiquarian friends.³ A sec-

²'The Second Edition, Corrected and Enlarged,' London (1762). A fourth edition was published before 1765 (See *Lit. Illus.* VIII, p. 396). It was also edited by Cooke, Oxford, 1806.

³See Mant, *Op. cit.* p. lxxviii. Copies are therefore rare; neither the British Museum nor Bodleian Library has one, but there is one in the library of Winchester College. The book has no title-page, but the name, 'T. Warton', is signed to the postscript, and the date, January 1782, is written in it. On page 11 the note of

ond enlarged and corrected edition⁴ of two hundred and fifty copies was printed the following year at Oxford by Daniel Prince.⁵ A new preface explained the author's theory of the value of minute antiquarian studies as contributions to a general history of manners, arts, and customs. It declared his purpose of supplying a detailed study of the locality he knew best and showed how the history of national antiquities might be drawn from similar descriptions of every county. That is to say, Warton's antiquarian research was directed toward a definite and useful end; it was not an end in itself.

Warton's principal interest of a strictly antiquarian character was, however, in mediæval architecture. Yet his study of this subject, to which he devoted most of his vacations for thirty years, produced no results comparable to those of his studies of mediæval literature. Indeed his only published contribution to the subject is almost his first indication of interest in it. One of the digressions in the second edition of the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* is a brief review of the history of architecture in England with examples of the various periods.⁶

Of all the work that Warton left unfinished at his death, none is so tantalizing as the one he more than once described as *Observations, Critical and Historical, on Churches, Monasteries, Castles and Other Monuments of Antiquity*, and which was repeatedly announced as ready

Warton's presentation to the living at Kiddington, concludes, 'He is now Rector, Jul. 10, 1781'.

The postscript, the substance of which was more fully developed in the preface to later editions, is as follows. 'If ever a History of Oxfordshire should be undertaken, I wish to contribute this account of a parish, with which I am most nearly connected, and consequently best acquainted. Other places might have been selected, more fertile of curious information; but my choice was determined by my situation. As this account now stands detached, some notes, which in an intire history of the county would have been otherwise disposed of, were thought necessary. In its present state, I mean if it never should have the good fortune to be incorporated into a larger work, it may serve as a specimen of the writer's general idea of a parochial history. T. Warton.'

This copy belonged to Cayley Illingworth, Archdeacon of Stowe, whose *Topographical Account of the Parish of Scampton*, etc, London, 1808, may have been modelled upon Warton's suggestions.

⁴*The History and Antiquities of Kiddington: First published as a Specimen of a History of Oxfordshire.* It reached a third edition in 1815.

⁵*Lit. Anec.* III, p. 695, and VI, p. 180.

⁶Warton not very accurately described them as 'Saxon', 'Gothic Saxon', 'Saxon Gothic,' and 'Absolute,' 'Ornamental,' and 'Florid Gothic'. By *Saxon* Warton meant, however, *Norman*, and later substituted that term. See note in Phillips's edition of the *History of Winchester*, which reads, '*pro Saxon lege Norman.*'

for publication,⁷ but which never appeared. John Price, the Bodleian Librarian and Warton's close friend, was authority for the statement that he purposed contributing a paper on the *History of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* to the Antiquarian Society, of which he had long been a member,⁸ but to which he had not contributed any papers. He also reported to Mant that among Warton's papers which came into his hands at his death and which he communicated to Dr. Warton there was a manuscript written out ready for the press with directions to the printer, which contained a *History of Saxon and Gothic Architecture*.⁹ Such a manuscript—and there is less reason to question Price's statement than to deplore the carelessness with which Warton's papers were evidently handled immediately after his death—has never been found. After Joseph Warton's papers passed into the hands of his son John, they seem to have been well taken care of, and the latter made a thorough, but vain, search for the manuscript. He did find, however, what still remains in the possession of his heirs, some manuscripts which are of value to his biographer because they show that he spent his holidays in untiring devotion to this hobby.

These manuscripts¹⁰ are the property of Miss Catherine H. Lee, the great granddaughter of Joseph Warton. They consist of four copy-books of architectural notes made by Warton on the course of his vacation rambles. There are also eight transcripts or enlarged versions of the first notes, and eight books of copies of these transcripts, copied out faithfully and much more legibly by the laureate's sister, Miss Jane Warton. These copy-books were not the only records of the antiquarian journeys, for one finds in them references, 'see Tom Warton's Journal', or 'N. B. Examine Pocket-Book'. Of these additional records I have been able to find only three journals, in the library of Winchester College. They consist for the most part of very meagre personal detail of the number of miles travelled per day, the inns visited, the state of the weather, the expense of the journey, etc. There are also at Winchester and in the library of Trinity College, Oxford, several more books of architectural notes similar to those in Miss Lee's possession though rather less full and if possible more untidy and illegible. There are no enlarged

⁷See letter to Gough, June 11, 1781, 'Warton's Observations etc. . are ready for the press; but the History of Architecture is not yet finished. How soon he will publish them, I cannot say.' *Lit. Illus.* V, p. 528. It was referred to in the *History of English Poetry* as a work soon to appear, Vol. I, Diss. I, p. (113), note a and Vol. III, p. xxii.

⁸Warton was elected in 1771.

⁹Mant, *Op. cit.* I, p. xxxii.

¹⁰They are mentioned by Sir Sidney Lee in his life of Warton in the *Dic. Nat. Biog.*

versions of them. The very unordered and incomplete condition of both the copy-books and transcripts shows that they are not the 'copy fairly written out for the press' which Price described to Mant, but only a collection of material for it.¹¹

So far as we can judge from the notebooks, the summer tours upon which this material was collected began in 1760, though there is some reason to think that his habit of taking careful notes of architectural antiquities personally observed had been formed earlier.¹² Perhaps it was an inheritance or the result of youthful visits to historic places. The idea of utilizing the descriptions of places visited for the definite purpose of a history of architecture was a later thought. As soon after the close of the Trinity term as it was possible for Warton to get away from Oxford, he would set out alone or with a companion¹³ to make a leisurely peregrination or 'ramble' of perhaps two weeks. In his later years the journeys were often made later in the summer and probably by chaise,¹⁴ and if Dr. Warton and his family did not sometimes accompany him, they at least joined him occasionally, for they are mentioned as his companions in the Winchester Journals of 1775, 1779 and 1788.

Sometimes the route lay southwestward, through Kent, Sussex and Essex, with visits at Lewes, Croydon, Canterbury, etc.¹⁵, and admitting

¹¹The following is the titlepage of the manuscript:

Critical and Historical Observations. On Churches, Castles, etc., in various Counties of England. Taken from an actual Survey. Improved from the Author's collection printed and pub.

(only so much added from books as might illustrate and confirm what I said)

Persons on the spot will find fault with *why* I have added 'certain'.^a

A work of Taste & history of manners.

This work is the result of various journies & the examination of various MS. evidences.

^aOn the second page the title reads 'On certain Churches' etc.

¹²For example, the *History of Winchester* is based largely on personal observation.

¹³That he sometimes traveled alone is shown by his *Ode to Solitude at an Inn*, written May 15, 1769, at a village inn between Thetford and Ely. (See Warton's *Poems*, ed. 1802, I, p. 140, and Lee MSS.) Yet he often uses the pronoun 'we' in his journals, although he seldom names his companion. Under the date of Aug. 19, 1788, he says, 'Ride to Brockley-Comb with Dr. Warton' and under the date of Aug. 8, 1789, his last tour, he writes, 'met J. Price at Willect (?)' Winchester MSS. See also Trinity MSS. Sept. 18, 1767.

¹⁴For example, Sunday, Aug. 10, 1788, he writes, 'Drove from Beeston through Wroxall'. Winchester MSS.

¹⁵May, 1763 and June, 1764. Lee MSS.

of a brief stay in London;¹⁶ sometimes northward, through Norfolk and Suffolk, to visit Newark and Lincoln, Norwich,¹⁷ Thetford, and Ely;¹⁸ again westward into Wales, where romantic landscapes furnished a fine setting for ruined castles. Frequently the journey began at Winchester, when Joseph Warton very likely accompanied his brother. Sometimes they proceeded by easy stages southward to Christ Church, where Thomas made observations on the fine old 'Saxon' (Norman) building with its Gothic easing, and indignantly lamented the damage it suffered during the grand rebellion when the horses of the Presbyterians were stabled in the Lady Chapel, to the serious injury of the fine ornamental work over the altar.²⁰ Thence they journeyed westward into picturesque Devonshire and to Exeter, where he found the cathedral 'very heavy and far from magnificent';²¹ then northward to Taunton and to Glastonbury,²² where the portcullis and sprig-rose of Henry VII were conspicuous decorative features not only of the abbey but in various parts of the town—ornaments which Warton shrewdly suspected were taken from the abbey itself. From there they might go on to Oxford by way of Cirencester.²³ One of the Winchester journals describes a 'Tour from Winton into Sussex, and round to Oxford' including stops at Tewkesbury Abbey, Worcester Cathedral, Westham Church, and a visit at 'General Oglethorpe's, a most sequestered romantic situation, with some pictures of Sir Peter Lely &c.'²⁴ In 1788, although he had twinges of gout and spent several days of his vacation at Bath, he made a long journey from Sonning to Southampton and one day drove fifteen miles to Cheddar Cliff where he was impressed with the view. He described it as 'a most stupendous aperture on the South side of Mendip a winding chasm of vast breadth with immense cliffs, gigantic scale mass(?) of various shapes & sizes most lofty & often perpendicular with Caverns here and there, bearing away to Rocky(?) Hole, 4 miles off.'²⁵

Warton's journals show that he had a fondness for wild and strik-

¹⁶Warton was at Rochester May 25, 1763, and London lay on his route to both Oxford and Winchester. He was at Dover June 7, and Waltham June 14, 1764; the journey from Dover to Waltham, of which no account is given, could not have occupied a week's time, and the route again lay through London. He was at Hampton Court, just outside London, May 7, 1769. Lee MSS.

¹⁷1765. *Ibid.*

¹⁸1769. *Ibid.*

¹⁹May, 1762. *Ibid.*

²⁰May 5, 1761. *Ibid.*

²¹May 8, 1761. *Ibid.*

²²May 14-15, 1761. *Ibid.*

²³May 19, 1761. *Ibid.*

²⁴June 4, 1775. Winchester MSS.

²⁵Aug. 4 to 28, 1788. *Ibid.*

ing scenes like those just described, and it is interesting to note that he often applies the term 'romantic' to them. For example, in his journal for 1767 occurs this description: 'On the side of a romantic Valley, very steep and rocky, among woods and vallies(?) stands Bury Castle. . The position is most romantie & solitary.'²⁶ Another romantic situation was that of the old dormitory at Brecknoek, 'on a Declivity cover'd with oaks falling down to the irregular windings of the River Usk'.²⁷

In the pages of these notebooks we catch many interesting glimpses of Warton and his companion; now they are amid the ruins of Goodrich Castle in Herefordshire,—a castle Warton described as picturesquely situated 'on the edge of a woody and rocky declivity, rising from a romantic and winding valley, water'd by the river Wye,'²⁸ spending the long May afternoon wandering about its scanty ruins, tracing the lines of the old walls, examining the square Norman tower, and the Chapel indicated by the remains of the great east window and the 'perishing outline' of a saint in red at the entrance,²⁹ and in the late evening lingering over an inscription whose antique characters were scarcely legible in the last rays of the sun setting behind the castle.³⁰ Again we see them at Hereford Cathedral, bewailing the disfigurement of the nave, when it was turned into a parish church, 'by a most shabby set of pews for hearing the sermons', and of the arches opening into the choir by a 'very clumsy and tawdrey organ gallery'.³¹ Frequently we find Warton among the ruins of an old church looking over the old sexton's trumpery collection of 'relics,'—'old keys, spurs, bits of pavements, etc. dug up from the Ruins'³²—in hope of making a real 'find'; or in a less dilapidated church leading on the sexton or chorister to tell of the old days when the vaulted arches reëchoed at matins and evensong the tones of the now disused organ and the voices of the choir long since disbanded.³³ On all these journeys Warton's enthusiasm never flagged; with scrupulous care he noted down the various styles of architecture, the general state of preservation or decay, the subjects of storied windows, the fine old brasses and tombs which had escaped the ravages of time and the Presbyterians, and the names of antiquarian works with which his observations were to be compared. The brief journal of his last vacation tour, in the vicinity of Southampton, shows him as eager as ever, and

²⁶Sept. 3, 1767. Trinity Coll. MSS.

²⁷May 18, 1771. Lee MSS.

²⁸May 12, 1771. *Ibid.*

²⁹Now wholly disappeared.

³⁰May 12, 1771. *Ibid.*

³¹May 13, 1771. *Ibid.*

³²St. Alban's, Dec. 30, 1759. *Ibid.*

³³Llandaff, May 30, 1760. *Ibid.*

contains antiquarian notes on the Roman road from Porchester to Chichester.³⁴

Very naturally Warton's purpose soon came to be more than simply investigation. His enthusiastic love for these fine old treasures was roused to indignation when he saw their dilapidation hastened by the vandalism of rural communities who pillaged the ruins of noble abbeys and castles to build their own houses or roads,³⁵ and he did what he could to stop their ravages. According to the late Henry Boyle Lee, the grandmother of the present owner of Warton's notebooks used to tell of 'her uncle's self-congratulations on the subject of his efforts in that direction. He would relate with glee how often he had stopped some pury vicar riding with his wife stuck behind him on a pillion into Oxford, or Winchester, or about any neighborhood in which he had sojourned, and how he had scolded, and argued, and almost shed tears, rather than fail to enlist their sympathies in favour of some tomb or niche which he had heard of as being doomed to destruction,' or how he had lingered 'over ale and tobacco in out-of-the-way roadside inns' to convert 'from the error of his ways some stupid farmer, who had designs on the recumbent effigy of doughty knight or stately dame, and was about to have it mutilated and maimed for the purpose of making more pewroom for the hoops and petticoats of his buxom daughters'.³⁶ Not the least valuable result of Warton's antiquarian jaunts, therefore, was that he stayed the hands of many such destroyers throughout the country, while he was planning at the same time to arouse in the polite reading-public a renewed interest in the treasures of their glorious past which would ensure their future preservation.

To appreciate the importance and value of Warton's interest in Gothic architecture, one has but to consider the depth of contempt and neglect into which that style of architecture had sunk in the eighteenth century in the wake of the revival of the Renaissance style introduced from Italy by Inigo Jones and popularized by Sir Christopher Wren. The beauties of Westminster Abbey and the Tower were quite overlooked by eighteenth century admirers of St. Paul's, who were not to be easily won back to an appreciation of the beauties of mediæval architecture.

The revival of interest in mediæval architecture has been closely associated by students of the romantic movement with that of mediæval literature,³⁷ and the name which has always occupied the most

³⁴Aug. 8, 1789. Winchester MSS.

³⁵Bury, 1769. Lee MSS.

³⁶Henry Boyle Lee: *Thomas Warton, Cornhill Magazine*, June, 1865, vol. XI, p. 737 ff.

³⁷For example, H. A. Beers: *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, 1910. Chapter VII, *The Gothic Revival*.

prominent place among those who contributed to this revival is that of the dilettante and virtuoso, Horace Walpole. The manuscript notes on architecture of Thomas Warton, however, help to establish his claim to be considered with Walpole in this respect and show that his interest was deeper and his influence equally great.

Warton's study of Gothic architecture is the more important because it was not a pose nor a fad, like Walpole's, but the natural complement of his other mediæval interests. In neither did love of the subject arise from any thorough knowledge of mediæval building. Both were distressingly ignorant (from a modern point of view) of the details of the subject, so that even Warton, who studied the technical side much more thoroughly than Walpole,³⁸ gave only a confused description of the periods and styles of architecture. Warton's interest, however, had much deeper root than Walpole's. Although Walpole was, as Leslie Stephen said, 'almost the first modern Englishman who found out that our old cathedrals were really beautiful',³⁹ mediæval art was after all only a toy for him, and his absurd imitations of old architecture—his parodies of altars and tombs for his chimney pieces and of cathedral pillars for his garden gate posts—resemble the 'whilom' and 'ywis' of the first eighteenth century imitators of Spenser. His service in setting a Gothic fashion in architecture is quite comparable to that of those poets whose half-amused fondness for Spenserian verse gave it a certain popularity even before genuine appreciation and intelligent study had produced a justification of its beauties on firm grounds of critical theory such as Warton's *Observations on the Faerie Queene*. On the other hand Warton's more genuine admiration for the architectural beauties of the past urged him to attempt a similar service for mediæval architecture; his *Observations of the Churches, Castles, etc. of England*, with its pendent *History of Gothic Architecture*, would have been a companion piece to his observations on Spenser in all that enthusiastic love of the subject and careful observation could do. But, unfortunately for the history of Gothic architecture in England, Warton was a scholar, not a builder; poetic insight could not fathom the mysteries of architecture; and Warton's history, had it been published, though valuable in its day, would have had far less revolutionary and permanent value than his critical work in a sister art.

³⁸In those fields where their interests touched, Walpole always recognized Warton's superior scholarship and mastery of the subject. When Warton sent him the second edition of the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* with a complimentary note, Walpole replied with sincerity, 'compare your account of Gothic architecture with mine; I have scarce skimmed the subject; you have ascertained all its periods.' Walpole's *Letters*, Ed. cit. V, p. 237.

³⁹*Hours in a Library*, ed. 1907, vol. II, p. 139.

Warton's interest in mediæval architecture not only was more genuine than Walpole's but probably even preceded it in point of time; he was certainly equally influential in reviving general interest in the subject even though the work that was to set forth its history never appeared. Walpole first showed his interest in 1750 when he declared in his private correspondence his purpose of building a 'little Gothic castle at Strawberry Hill';⁴⁰ by that time Warton had shown in three publications his admiration for Gothic architecture. His *Pleasures of Melancholy*, written in 1745 and published in 1747, contained many references to it; his *Triumph of Isis*, 1749, has a eulogy of the Gothic beauties of Oxford, and his *Description of Winchester*, 1750, is full of admiring descriptions of mediæval architecture. If Walpole's tastes were more talked of among gentlemen of fashion, and his influence is, for that reason, more apparent to the student of the period, Warton's had a wider circulation among a substantial class of growing importance, and his influence therefore deserves greater recognition than it has yet received. His services in arresting the destruction of the crumbling remains of feudal castles and mediæval abbeys under the combined depredations of time and ruthless neighbours, though quite unostentatious, were more persistent and probably far more effective than Walpole's, especially since his landlessness saved him from that temptation to add a few genuine old Gothic pieces to a miscellaneous collection of imitations to which both Walpole and Scott yielded.

Therefore, for his genuine and deep-rooted admiration for Gothic architecture, as shown in his poetry and in his critical work, for his persistent efforts to comprehend its forms and development, for his attempt to write its history illustrated with descriptions of many of its best examples throughout England, and for his quiet but earnest efforts to preserve these examples, Warton's name deserves to stand high on the list of those who contributed to the revival of interest in mediæval architecture as part of the whole mediæval revival. Yet, however valuable was his strictly antiquarian work, his perception of the relative unimportance of such studies, which distinguished him from the 'mere antiquarian', led him to reserve it for his holidays, while he devoted his best energies to works of whose immediate and lasting value there is no question.

⁴⁰*Letters*, ed. cit. II, p. 423.

CHAPTER XI

LAST YEARS. 1780-1790.

One of the most important among the varied interests that distracted Warton from his purpose of completing the *History of English Poetry*¹ was the final expression of his life-long devotion to Milton. The constancy of this interest had been repeatedly shown,—by digressions on Milton's poetry in his first critical work, by the obvious influence of Milton on his own poetry, and by frequent references to him in the history of poetry. The result of this long study was that in 1785 Warton published one of his best works, an edition of Milton's shorter poems.² Like his father,³ the editor was eager to establish the great poet's reputation. On the basis of his own sound scholarship he compelled recognition of Milton's importance in the eighteenth century by describing the rise of a 'school of Milton . . . in emulation of the school of Pope',⁴ and secured a fuller appreciation of his poetry by a modern interpretation of it, especially by applying to its study the new historical method.

Warton had previously recognized the need for the historical study of Milton when he pointed out in the *Observations* that an acquaintance with that very mediæval literature which had been mistakenly overlooked even in the study of Spenser was also important for the study of Milton. He realized that since Milton was at least partly 'an old English poet', he required 'that illustration, without which no old English poet can be well illustrated',⁵ which is to be found in 'Gothic' literature. The great merits, therefore, of Warton's edition of Milton arise from his ripe scholarship and his excellent poetical taste. His acquaintance with many of the poets with whom Milton must have been familiar enabled him correctly to interpret his poet; his taste and

¹Yet the plan was never wholly abandoned. See Mant, *Op. cit.* p. lxxviii; *Lit. Ancc.* III, p. 696, and preface to the edition of Milton, 1785.

²*Poems upon Several Occasions, English, Italian, and Latin*, . by John Milton . with notes critical and explanatory, and other illustrations, by Thomas Warton, London 1785. Second edition, 'with many alterations, and large additions', London 1791.

³For whom he claimed the merit of having introduced the shorter poems to Pope. *Ed. Milton*, 1791, Pref. p. x.

⁴*Ibid.* p. xii.

⁵*Ibid.* p. xxiv.

sympathy helped him to point out Milton's chief beauties. The notes to the edition are a rich collection of comment upon the work of other editors, of corrections of textual emendations by comparison with the Milton autograph manuscript⁶ as well as with early editions, of explanations of obscure words and figures by the study of modern and classical parallels, and of critical appreciation of poetical excellences.

Besides contributions to the literary study of Milton, Warton made an important discovery of biographical material when he prepared for inclusion in the second edition a copy of Milton's nuncupative will, together with the evidence taken at the hearing of the case on its being contested.⁷ Another important addition was his account of the origin and history of *Comus*.⁸

The result of a lifetime of study was an edition of Milton that is not only one of Warton's best works, but one that has been described by a modern editor of Milton as 'one of the best books of comment in the English language.'⁹ It is generally recognized as an important source for the study of Milton.¹⁰ And on the whole its merits were pretty well recognized even when it first appeared. In the thirty years that had elapsed since his commentary on Spenser was published, historical criticism had made such progress that some readers could appreciate the work of a critic who was 'not less conversant with Gothic than with classical knowledge.'¹¹ This attitude of appreciative approval was not, however, universal; an anonymous letter to the editor¹² attacked the work not only on this very ground that it quoted too extensively from the 'English Black Letter Classics' and fostered the

⁶At Trinity College, Cambridge. A description of it with variant readings forms an appendix to Warton's second edition, pp. 578-590.

⁷After a long and fruitless search Warton was obliged to confess in the first edition that he was unable to find the will, and he concluded that it was no longer in existence. With the aid of Sir Wm. Scott, however, he was able to add it to the second edition. See Pref. p. xlii.

⁸Reprinted in *Comus, a mask: presented at Ludlow Castle 1634* etc. London, 1799, and in Brydges's ed. of the *Poetical Works of Milton*, 6 vols. 1835, vol. V, p. 173. ff.

⁹David Masson: *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, 3 vols. London, 1874, III, p. 341.

¹⁰Warton's notes were transferred almost bodily to Todd's 'Variorum' edition 1801, to Hawkins's ed., 1824, and they have been drawn upon ever since. See also Brydges's ed. 1835, and the Aldine ed. 1845.

¹¹*Critical Review*, May 1785, LIX, p. 321. See also *Gent. Mag.* 1785, LV¹, pp. 290 ff., 374 ff., 457 ff.; *Monthly Rev.* LXXIX, p. 97 ff. and Hawkins's preface.

¹²*A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Warton on his late edition of Milton's Juvenile Poems*, London, 1785.

growing 'Relish for all such Reading as was never read,'¹³ but, more justly, for its tendency to over-long and tedious explanations of trifling points and for the unnecessary severity of the criticism of Milton's Puritanism. The latter are undoubtedly the defects of the work; the former is, however, one of its chief merits and the principal source of its sympathetic interpretation of the poet. An exchange of mild hostilities on the subject of the edition of Milton between Warton's critics and his admirers, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* during 1785 and 1786,¹⁴ has no critical value.

The success of the edition of Milton's shorter poems encouraged Warton to continue and complete it with a second volume containing a similar study of *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regained*.¹⁵ He therefore removed from the first volume such notes as related particularly to those poems and prepared others. But this plan, like other of his projects, was never completed. It was, however, carried to such an advanced state of completion that in the summer of 1789 Warton expected it to appear the following April.¹⁶ The second edition of the minor poems, which was to be the first volume of the intended whole,¹⁷ was in the hands of the printer at the time of his death,¹⁸ and was issued without alteration the following year. It is probable that most of the notes for the second volume were lost, as Mant says,¹⁹ in that removal of Warton's papers from Oxford to Winchester which was so disastrous to the notes for the fourth volume of the history of poetry.

¹³*Ibid.* p. 40.

¹⁴LV¹ pp. 416 and 435, LV² p. 513, and LVI¹ pp. 211-214.

¹⁵Mant reported an unsubstantiated rumour to the effect that the king had suggested the enlargement of the plan. *Op. cit.* p. xc.

¹⁶He wrote to Steevens from Southampton July 27, 1789, 'My first volume, with many considerable alterations and accessions, is quite ready for Press; and the Copy of the second is in great forwardness, so that I believe I shall be out by next April.' Bodl. MSS. Eng. Misc. C. 1, fol. 86.

¹⁷The signatures of this volume are numbered *Vol. I* in anticipation of the second volume.

¹⁸Toward the close of the long vacation at Winchester he wrote to Malone, 'I am deep in my Milton, and go to press with that work the 7th. of November' (Winton, Sept. 30th, 1789, Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 30375, no. 11), and to Price, 'I return with my new edition of Milton ready for press at the Clarendon.' (Oct. 12, 1789, Mant, *Op. cit.* p. lxxxix. See also Mant, p. xc and the preface to the second edition of *Milton*, p. xxvi). A little later he wrote again to Malone, 'We are at press most rapidly with *Milton*' (B. M. MSS. as above no. 12), and, 'I have lately been so much hurried by . . . Milton's Proofs . . . that I have not been able to find the Transcript as I promised.' (16th Dec. 1789, same, no. 14).

¹⁹*Op. cit.* p. xci.

Joseph Warton long intended to publish in completion of the edition,²⁰ the few notes that remained, but he never did so. After his death, his son, John Warton, sent them to Todd to be used in his second edition of Milton.²¹

In the preparation of his edition of Milton, Warton, as usual, engaged the help of his friends in the search for wanted books and manuscripts. I cull from his letters evidence of a few such borrowings. From Isaac Reed he begged the favour of 'T. Randolph's Poems, printed at Oxford in 1637,²² not 1640, which is the second edition,'²³ which he thought might be the edition containing *Comus*²⁴ described by Sir Henry Wotton.²⁵ Being unable to find such an edition, he came to a conclusion which was borne out by his own experience of old English books, that the combination was made by the binder. He consulted Steevens, to whom he sent notes on Shakespeare, about the Milton manuscript at Trinity College, Cambridge,²⁶ and arranged to make transcripts from it when he should visit Cambridge.²⁷ He twice acknowledges 'hints for Milton' from Malone, but does not indicate their character.²⁸

The preparation of the two editions of Milton and of the enlarged edition of his poetry—and he had not wholly abandoned the history of poetry—was not so engrossing that Warton did not find time to take a lively interest in the literary labours of his friends. During his whole life he had been as eager to help them as he was glad to acknowledge their contributions to his own work. He was at this time particularly

²⁰See letter to Hayley, 1792, Wooll. Op. cit. p. 404.

²¹7 vols, London, 1809, vol. I, pref. p. vi.

²²Warton corrected this date to 1638 in his second ed. Milton, p. 119.

²³Letter to Isaac Reed, April 13th, 1873. Montague d. 2, fol. 51. This letter and those preceding and following, to Malone and Steevens, are printed in full with notes in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XIV, no. 1, pp. 96-118.

²⁴'You were properly right in guessing why I wished to see this Book. I have been (with you) long searching for *Comus* at the end of this volume of Randolph, . . . I think Mr. Bowle (Wilts) told me he saw a *Randolph*, with *Comus* annexed.' Letter to Reed, April 19th, 1783. Bodl. MSS. Montague d. 2, fol. 54.

²⁵See Warton's Milton, second edition, pp. 118 ff.

²⁶Western MSS. no. 583. See also *Milton*, ed. cit., pp. 578-590.

²⁷The Trinity manuscript will not be wanted until we arrive at the end of the present volume; I think with you, that I must [be] the Transcriber; and I will endeavour to arrange the matter so as to visit Cambridge at Christmas next, and to do the Business.' Letter to Steevens, Southampton, July 27th, 1789. Bodl. MSS. Eng. Misc. C. 1, fol. 86.

²⁸'Many thanks for the hints for Milton', Purbrook, Aug. 17th, 1787, and, 'I avail myself, with many thanks, for your hints to my Milton.' Oxon. Dec. 6, 1789, Brit. Mus. MSS. Addit. 30375, nos. 8 and 13.

interested in Malone's plan for an edition of Shakespeare, and was able to be of considerable help in its preparation, contributing to it from his collections for the later and unfinished portion of his history of poetry. For this purpose he called Malone's attention to 'a thin folio of manuscript miscellaneous poems, in which I believe are the pieces you wish [Mr. Downes] to transcribe,'²⁹ which contained Basse's 'Epitaph on Shakespeare',³⁰ among other pieces.³¹ He also pointed out Spenser's sonnet in the life of Scanderbeg,³² and 'A Description of the Queens (Elizabeth) Entertainment in Progress at Lord Hartford's at Elmtham in Hantshire, 1591',³³ which he found 'at a friend's house in Hampshire.'³⁴ He transcribed portions from the manuscripts of Wood and Aubrey with reference to Spenser,³⁵ Jonson,³⁶ and Shakespeare.³⁷ He sent Wright's *Historia Histrionica*, 1699,³⁸ which had been reprinted as the preface to the eleventh volume of Dodsley's *Plays*, his own copy of the third edition of *Venus and Adonis*,³⁹ and Chettle's *Kind Hart Dreame* from Winchester.⁴⁰ He also arranged for the copy-

²⁹Jun. 22d, 1781, same MSS. no. 1.

³⁰Warton at first ascribed this poem to Donne because it was included in the first edition of his poems in 1633.

³¹The Rawlinson MSS. 14652 (now Rawl. poet. 161) written about 1640, contains 'Shakespeare's epitaph' (fol. 13) and 'one or two pieces (a Sonnet & an Epitaph), signed W. *Shakespeare*. This Manuscript is about the times of Charles the First.' Letter to Malone, Jun. 22d, 1781, as above.

³²The sonnet beginning 'Wherefore doth vaine Antiquity so vaunt' which appears as a dedicatory poem to *The Historie of George Castriot*, etc. London, 1596.

³³*The honourable Entertainement given to the Queenes Majestie in Progresse, at Elvetham in Hampshire, by the right Honorable the Earle of Hertford, 1591*, London, 1591.

³⁴Odiham, Hants. Jul. 29, 1787 [9?] MS. as above, no. 5.

³⁵Sept. 30th. 1789 and 21st Nov. 1789, same MS. nos. 11 and 12.

³⁶Dec. 6, 16, 20, 1789, same MS. nos. 13, 14 and 15.

³⁷16th Dec. same MS.

³⁸'Wright's *Preface* shall also be sent with Shakespeare's Poem.' Trin. Coll. Oxon. Mar. 19, 1785, same MS. no. 2.

³⁹'By a coach of next Thursday you will receive the *Venus and Adonis*. It is bound up with many coeval small poets, the whole making a Dutch-built but dwarfish volume.' (Same letter).

The volume was apparently wanted again two years later, for Warton then wrote to Malone, 'I am exceedingly sorry to be so far from Oxford, as to be hindered from accommodating you immediately with the *Venus and Adonis*. If I should be at Oxford within three weeks, I will send it. Upon Recollection, Dr. Farmer has a Copy, who will undoubtedly lend it with pleasure.' Purbrook-Park, Near Portsmouth, Jul. 29th, 1787. Same MS. no. 7.

⁴⁰Oxon. March 30th., 1785, same, no. 3.

ing of a portrait of the actor Lowin, in the Ashmolean Museum.⁴¹ 'A good engraving' of it, he thought, would be 'a most proper and interesting ornament of your new Edition. . . . I am sure it will make an excellent head.'⁴² Notes on the description and history of Beaulieu and Tichfield for the '*Southampton Memoirs*'⁴³ were quite in Warton's line, and promptly supplied.⁴⁴

Although his literary achievement is his only claim upon posterity, Warton did not regard himself as primarily a man of letters. During the whole of his busy and fruitful literary career he did not neglect what he always considered his first duties, as fellow and tutor of Trinity College, as professor of the University of Oxford, and as clergyman of the Church of England. It is in the last capacity that he is most overlooked, and justly. Yet, although Warton's career as a clergyman is not important in his history, it is not discreditable judged by the standards of his day, nor is it wholly without interest. Neither his talents nor his ambitions lay in the direction of clerical work; he sought no preferments, and his abilities as a divine were not such as to command substantial rewards. Intended by his father for the church as the most honourable calling open to a man of his family and parts and as the one calculated to make least exacting demands upon his time or abilities, yet one which ensured at the worst a comfortable living and at the best almost unlimited opportunities for preferments and distinction should he prove ambitious, Thomas Warton accepted this most natural view of his career. Immediately upon taking his first degree he entered holy orders and proceeded in due time to the divinity degree.⁴⁵ His only preferments were obscure village churches in the neighborhood of Oxford, which had at least the merit of not interrupting his residence there nor interfering much with his scholarly pursuits. His first appointment was to the curacy of Woodstock, Oxfordshire, which he served for nearly twenty years.⁴⁶ In October, 1771, he was

⁴¹In the letter of Mar. 19, 1785, he says, 'I have seen Lowin's picture,' and describes it. He was afraid, however, that the Custos of the *Ashmolean* could not permit the picture to be sent to Town, and two years later he arranged for Malone's artist to 'work in some of the Apartments of the Museum.' 27th Oct. 1787.

⁴²Oxon. Mar. 30th, 1785.

⁴³See Boswell's edition of Malone's *Shakespeare*, XX, pp. 433-5 for another letter on the same subject.

⁴⁴Purbrook, Aug. 17th, 1787.

⁴⁵A.B. 1747, B.D. 1767. Foster: *Alumni Oxonienses, 1745-1886*, IV, p. 1505.

⁴⁶27 April, 1755 to 3 April, 1774. *Wartoniana*, in *The Literary Journal: a Review of Literature, Science, Manners, Politics for the year 1803*, vol. I. London 1803, p. 601.

presented to the small living of Kiddington,⁴⁷ near Woodstock, which he retained until his death. Two other small livings are also assigned to him, the vicarage of Shalfeld, Wiltshire,⁴⁸ and Hill Farrance, Somerset, the gift of his college.⁴⁹

In the pulpit Warton was probably not very effective. His indistinct and hurried manner of speaking made him very difficult to understand.⁵⁰ In accord with a practice in better repute in the eighteenth century than now, he did not always take pains to write his own sermons, and he preached the same ones repeatedly.⁵¹ When, as a young man who had not yet taken his degree, he had a sermon to prepare and deliver before the university and the bishop, its preparation filled him with some dismay, and he sent his plan in great anxiety to his brother, who replied reassuringly, praising the subject, making suggestions and predicting a successful outcome.⁵² Warton's biographer reports that one university sermon won him much praise, and he praised a Latin sermon of his which he had seen as clear, well-arranged and in good Latin style.⁵³ The two sermons among his papers at Winchester College are entirely mediocre.

If Warton was not distinguished as a preacher, he seems at least to have been satisfactory to the members of his charge in those days of fox-hunting, port-drinking and even more negligent parsons. The people of Woodstock long remembered him with affectionate regard as one of the best curates who ever officiated there.⁵⁴ Certainly he was not

⁴⁷Modern Kiddington. This living was given him by George Henry, Earl of Lichfield, the Chancellor of the University, Oct. 22, 1771. See *Hist. Kid.* 1st ed. p. 11.

⁴⁸1768, see Anderson's *British Poets*, 13 vols. London, 1795, XI, p. 1054.

⁴⁹1782. Mant, *Op. cit.* p. lxxxii.

⁵⁰One of his hearers at Woodstock said, 'though not one in ten could understand half he said, everybody loved him.' *Literary Journal*, p. 601.

⁵¹Chalmers had two sermons that he often preached, but neither was written by him; one was a printed sermon; the other, in an old hand, was thought to be his father's. *Op. cit.* p. 85, note.

⁵²See letters of Joseph to Thomas Warton, May 16 and 20, 1754, Wooll, *Op. cit.* pp. 221 & 233. The second letter is there dated 1755, obviously an error, for it was evidently written just after the other, and both refer to Joseph's removal from Tynesdale to Tunworth, in 1754.

⁵³Mant, *Op. cit.* p. cvii.

⁵⁴'His easy wit and good humour rendered him universally acceptable; and though his pulpit oratory does not appear ever to have entitled him to particular notice, many are still alive who speak of him with more regard and affection than of any person who ever officiated there. The rector, Mr. Halloway, though certainly not a man of genius, was a man after his own heart, as far as convivial and social habits were concerned; and Saturday, Sunday, and part of Monday were generally spent at Woodstock, in the most agreeable manner.' *Lit. Jour.* p. 280.

inaccessible to the members of his flock,⁵⁵ and, if not over-curious as to their spiritual welfare, was not indifferent to their temporal interests, especially of such as were poetically inclined. For example, he took a lively interest in the poetizing of young John Bennet, the son of the parish clerk at Woodstock.⁵⁶

In his later years Warton found his pastoral duties more and more a burden. He never attempted to serve his charges during the long vacations, which he habitually spent with his brother at Winchester; and, as other duties and interests became more absorbing, he came to depend entirely upon an auxiliary. In 1787 he abandoned his charge altogether and made William Mavor, a young Scotch schoolmaster at Woodstock, who had been his curate at Kiddington for some time, his 'perpetual Curate' there.⁵⁷

Warton's curate tells a story of his connection with the parish at Kiddington that shows his generosity. He says that 'after dining with him one Christmas day at the hospitable mansion of the late Edward Gore, Esq. of Kiddington, Warton beckoned him into the hall, and pulling out his purse, thus addressed him; "I expected to have received more money today, Sir—I shall want ten pounds myself to defray the expenses of a journey to London.—You are welcome to all the rest, Sir—All the rest Sir—I wish it had been more"''.⁵⁸ Probably this story

⁵⁵'No man knew better how to unbend than Warton. . . He seemed to delight in the society of women and children with whom he could talk nonsense, or to associate with men in general who were . . . *bon vivants*, wags, or punsters.' *Ibid.*

⁵⁶See *supra*.

⁵⁷Two letters to Mavor record this transaction: 'I beg the favour of you to continue your services for me at Kiddington till the second Sunday of February next, inclusive. After that time, if I should want a *perpetual* Curate at Kiddington (which I believe will be the case, and of which I will give you due Notice) I should wish to appoint *you* above all others. But I beg you to say nothing (at present) to the Family at Kiddington of my thoughts of a *perpetual* Curate. I shall see Mr. Gore very soon, which you may tell him; and that I have engaged you to attend the Church to the 2d Sunday in February, as above. If Bennet could call next Saturday, with your Account up to last Sunday, I will return the money by Him. Oxon. Nov. 26, 1787.'

'The Curacy of Kiddington is your's for the next twelve-months, and most probably will be so for a much longer time, as I have no thought at present of ever serving it myself. I presume you have no objection to the old Terms of Half a Guinea a Sunday. In case of a Burial on week days (a very rare Case) you will please to charge me a [cro (MS. torn)]wn each time. Fees for a Marriage &c., are to be your own. You will please to begin on next Sunday. Whenever you wish to settle, that business shall immediately be done. Oxon, Jan. 28th, 1788.' Bodl. MSS. Montague d. 18, fols. 136 and 135.

⁵⁸*Literary Journal*, p. 601.

can be dated at Christmas 1789, just before Warton's death, for he wrote to Malone from Oxford, December 20th of that year, 'I leave this place on Tuesday, and return 27th Instant. A letter, during that time, will find me at *Edward Gore's Esq at Kiddington near Enstone Oxfordshire*. I hope to be in Town about the 10th of January.'⁵⁹

The relinquishment of his pastoral work is the only sign Warton gave of decreasing vigor, if, indeed, this is to be regarded as a concession to waning strength rather than to increasing interests. At any rate he was still full of projects and surrounded with uncompleted work at the time of his death. Daniel Prince described his rooms at Oxford as literally strewn with manuscripts in small semblance of order,—the tables, chairs, window seats and shelves being covered with papers—in such a fashion as to show that the occupant was interrupted in the midst of his labours.⁶⁰ Until his sixty-first year Warton's health had always been extremely vigorous. He was then, however, attacked by gout. In his journal for 1788 appears this brief note, 'Saturday, Aug. 23. To Bath to Dr. Wilder's Creseent, Gout!'⁶¹ He did not stay long at Bath, however, and was as busy as ever the next year⁶² and more sanguine of his complete recovery than were his friends.⁶³ Two or three weeks before his death he went down to Woodstock to buy a horse, and rode him one morning in the best of spirits, entertaining his companion meanwhile with anecdotes about Woodstock and its early history. Here at Woodstock, while at a gentleman's table, he had a slight paralytic stroke which affected one of his hands.⁶⁴ The second and fatal stroke came suddenly. He spent the evening with a few companions in the Common Room in livelier spirits than usual. Suddenly, however, between ten and eleven o'clock he was seized with a paralytic stroke. He made but one attempt to speak, when he was thought to utter the name of his friend Priece, and relapsed into unconsciousness, dying the next afternoon before his brother could arrive at his bedside. He died May 21, 1790, and was buried in the ante chapel of his college on the twenty-seventh with the highest academical honours. The esteem in which Warton was held by the whole university as well as by the members of Trinity College was shown by the unusual honour that the funeral ceremony was attended, at their own request, by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, the heads

⁵⁹Oxon. Decemb. 20th, 1789. Brit. Mus. MSS. Ad. 30375, no. 15.

⁶⁰*Lit. Anec.* III, p. 702.

⁶¹Winchester Journals.

⁶²See his letters to Malone, just quoted.

⁶³Mant, *Op. cit.* p. xcii.

⁶⁴*Lit. Jour.* p. 603.

of houses, and the proctors. His grave is marked by a plain marble slab with a simple Latin inscription.⁶⁵

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THOMAS WARTON,
S. T. B. & S. A. S.
Hujus Collegii Socius,
Ecclesiæ de Cuddington
In Com. Oxon. Rector,
Poetices iterum Prælector,
Historices Prælector Camden,
Poeta Laureatus,
Obiit 21. Die Maii,
Anno Domini 1790,
Ætat. 63.

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CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION.

The influence of Warton's master passion, enthusiastic love of the past, is apparent in all his work. One of his most important contributions to romantic poetry was the revival of interest in mediæval life and poetry. The re-editing of classical authors and the freshening of interest in classical literature were the object of his labours as professor of poetry. The history and illustration of early English literature were the great work of his ripest powers. The study of mediæval architecture was the pursuit of his leisure. Even his politics, his religion, had a backward look; to both he gave the loyalty that he conceived was due to institutions upon which was set the seal of a noble past.

In literature Warton's close study of the past and its relation to the present had given him a clearer vision into the future, so that both his poetry and his criticism have a forward as well as a backward reach. They pointed the direction of progress by showing the beauties of the neglected past, the artificialities of the vaunted present, and the way poetry was to be reclaimed by a return to the earlier traditions. The same love of the past applied in other fields was productive of quite different results; the line of progress in religion and politics did not lie in the direction of a return to mediævalism. Neither Warton's political adherence nor his religious beliefs, therefore, although both were the result of the same love of the past, shows the romantic spirit of revolt and of progress that makes his critical theories significant; they looked backward only, and had no prophetic vision of the future.

And the limits of his interest were singularly narrow. So great was his versatility within his own limited field, so thorough his command of all its divisions, that one is at first inclined to lose sight of the extent of eighteenth century thought and interest in which Warton had no share. His field of interest was almost entirely literary, confined to poetry, criticism, history. In an age of theological unrest, of desperate attempts to reclaim wavering faiths from the abyss of scepticism, of pietistic efforts to save the church from within by an access of spiritual grace, Warton maintained a calm, unreflecting allegiance to the established church of England, without any indication that he was aware of the theological problems of his day. He was even more negligent of philosophical thought. The idealism of Berkeley, the scepticism of Hume, were equally outside his ken; philosophy for him was apparently comprised in Plato and Aristotle. To the great political move-

ments of the day, in both their theoretical and practical aspects, he was likewise indifferent. Neither Rousseau's *Social Contract* nor the thundering of the French Revolution, neither Paine's pamphlets and Burke's speeches, nor the progress of the war in America aroused in him any interest in contemporary events. The Oxford don kept himself secure in his ivory tower from the encroachments of political affairs.

In his relations with the church Warton showed the same ardent enthusiasm and loyalty that he felt for the poets, the literature, of the past. He gloried in its long and honourable history as an institution; he admired the dignity and solemnity of its forms of worship; he enjoyed the beauty of its ritual, its prayers, its music. The established church satisfied the longings of his soul and delighted his æsthetic sense. Warton was essentially a high-churchman; he would have rejected both the barrenness of the Methodist form of worship and its personal emotionalism for much the same reason that he objected to the popular psalmody used in many churches,¹ and for reasons partly æsthetic. His violent antipathy to the Puritans and Calvinists is more readily explained on æsthetic than on doctrinal grounds. He could never forgive the Puritans the ruinous havoc they wrought in the beautiful Gothic churches nor the check given to the progress of poetry by their narrow opposition to all literature not definitely religious.² All his works abound in bitter references to 'Oliver's people,'³ 'Cromwell's intruders,'⁴ 'Calvin's system of reformation,'⁵ while his too freely expressed religious prejudice against Puritanism makes a real blemish in his study of Milton.

Warton's æsthetic enjoyment of the forms of worship of the English church and the beauty of its choral service was very closely akin to his appreciation of Gothic art. There seems to have been a vein of æsthetic sensibility in this modest Oxford don who, without being melancholy, delighted in 'cloyster's pale', the 'ruined abbey's moss-grown piles', and 'sequester'd isles of the deep dome'; who was overcome with emotion when the Gothic sculptures of New College altar, which had been walled up early in Elizabeth's reign, were displayed to the public;⁶ and whose remark that 'taste and imagination make more antiquarians than the world is willing to allow' applies well to himself.

¹See *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, p. 168, 172-3, 194.

²*Observations on the Faerie Queene*, II, p. 279, and *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, III, 461.

³Lee MSS.

⁴*Spec. Hist. Oxford*, 2nd ed. p. 12.

⁵Lee MSS.

⁶Daniel Prince, who sat near Warton on that occasion, said, 'Poor Thomas fetched such sighs as I could not have thought he could breathe', *Lit. Anec.* III, p. 699.

In politics Warton was a Tory, like that other great mediaevalist whom he in many ways resembled, an ardent adherent of institutions whose history was long and glorious. His political interest, such as it was, was determined by his absorbing interest in the past. By natural bent and by inheritance his sympathies were Jacobite, though he took no part in the Jacobite cause, and, as laureate, acquiesced in honouring the unromantic Georges as the modern heirs of Alfred and the Edwards. Modern political problems, like those of religion, did not come near him.

The second great passion of Warton's life, and almost a corollary of the first, was his loyalty to Oxford. And Oxford set the limits of his practical interest as the love of the past determined his literary pursuits. Its little round of term-time and vacation, with the occasional diversion of an encaenia, was varied only by the long vacations spent at Winchester—where most of his writing was done, the summer tours to architectural ruins, and occasional very brief visits to London to arrange for the publication of his books, and to look in on his literary friends. As a result of this narrowing of interest most of Warton's work, even his poetry, has a decidedly academic flavour. While it never exactly reeks of the lamp, it is impregnated with the atmosphere in which it was produced. Warton's early poetry, both serious and humorous, is strikingly academic, from the *Triumph of Isis* to the *Progress of Discontent* and the *Panegyric on Oxford Ale*. In his later verse this quality is less apparent and shows itself only in the general determination of thought and interest.

Although Warton's love of the past, his appreciation of nature, and his critical method show that he belonged at least as much to the early nineteenth as to the eighteenth century, he was without the uncontrolled emotionalism and the spirit of revolt that marked many writers of the next century; he had the characteristic temper of his own time,—its composure, its restraint, its sound common sense. His mind was normal, healthy, well poised, free from self-searching and introspection; he was disturbed by no perplexing problems of his relation to the universe, no conflict between mind and heart; he seems to have passed through no '*Sturm und Drang*' period. He felt no imperative need of self-revelation; he kept no personal diary, nor poured out his soul in voluminous correspondence,—his letters, which were probably never very numerous, are brief and self-contained; his poetry, too, is restrained rather than full of feeling. Warton's very emotions were objective: they centered in his enthusiastic love for the past, his college, his friends, and his family. He was not, however, cold nor unresponsive; on the contrary he frequently gave evidence of deep feelings, of violent prejudices, of warm attachments, but he had always the control

of them. He seems to have differed much in this respect from his brother, who was demonstrative and emotional. He frequently revealed the *penseroso* mood in his poetry, but it was always serene and contemplative, as in Milton, rather than subjective and gloomy, as in many of his imitators. He was susceptible to beauty in nature, but it evoked from him no gushes of sentiment. He felt strongly the wonderful, the mystical, beauties of Gothic art, but the emotions they aroused were manly and composed.

Warton was said by an acquaintance to have been 'eminently handsome' in his youth, and even later, when sedentary habits, port, and good living had made his features heavy and his frame unwieldy, he was still 'remarkably well-looking'.⁷ But the editor of the *Probationary Odes* described him as a 'little, thick, squat, red-faced man.'⁷ The truth probably lies between the opinion of an admiring friend and the caricature of a satirist. His portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds⁸ in his best manner hangs in the Common Room at Trinity College, and reveals a countenance somewhat heavy and inert; the forehead wide and full; small, clear blue eyes, deep set under straight heavy brows that somehow hide their quiet force from the casual observer; a thin-lipped mouth redeemed from coldness by expressive curves, the downward droop of one corner balanced by a humorous upward turn at the other; and the bright healthy colour of the well-fed Englishman. The face and figure are more suggestive of the 'bon vivant' than the poet; the stolid, idle clergyman than the enthusiastic antiquary; the indolent Oxford don than the industrious scholar. A comparison of his rugged features with his brother's almost feminine smoothness suggests the contrast between the two men. Joseph was painted in a full-bottomed wig and academic gown and band; Thomas in a bob and his ordinary work jacket, none too tidily arranged. Urbanity and sensibility characterize one countenance; reserve and seriousness, the other.

Equal differences distinguished the two brothers in their social intercourse. Joseph was fond of society, affable, communicative, an addition to any society; Thomas was awkward, shy, silent, except in the company of his intimates. In his earlier days Thomas Warton seems to have been much fonder of society than later when his friendships and habits were formed. His natural shyness was increased by studious habits and years of pretty close application to work, and he came to limit his social intercourse more and more to those friends whose tastes were quite congenial with his own. He was particularly averse to the society of strangers, especially those of a literary turn.⁹ Within his

⁷Mant, *Op. cit.* p. cv-cvi.

⁸Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1784.

own college gates he was always sociable, gracious in entertaining his friends, fond of lingering with the other Fellows over their evening cakes and ale in the Common Room, but he could seldom be prevailed upon to dine with his friends in other colleges. The unanimous testimony of those who knew him well was that his conversation was singularly fascinating, easy, and lively, 'enriched with anecdote, and pointed with wit', so that he was the life of those social gatherings in which he found himself thoroughly at home.⁹

Socially, however, Thomas Warton fell on evil days. Although naturally genial and fond of congenial society, he was repelled by the formality and artificiality of the polite society of his day. When Fanny Burney at the height of her popularity was invited to dine with the Wartons and some other distinguished men, she gave in her journal this unfavourable account of Thomas Warton: 'Mr. Tom Warton, the poetry historiographer, looks unformed in his manners, and awkward in his gestures. He joined not one word in the general talk, and, but for my father, who was his neighbour at dinner, and entered into a *tête-à-tête* conversation with him, he would never have opened his mouth after the removal of the second course.'¹⁰ It is certain that Thomas Warton was not so fond of the society of young ladies as was his more susceptible brother; he probably had not read Miss Burney's lively but artificial novels, was unable to indulge her in the compliments and deference to which she was accustomed, and felt that he could do little else than fall silent in a company of which she was the presiding genius.

Yet Warton was not without social intercourse among literary men like himself, scholars and poets. He became a member of the Literary Club in 1782, and numbered among his friends some of the most distinguished men of his day both at Oxford and London. Judging from the letters of his London friends and their complaints of his neglect, he might have spent considerable time in a round of pleasant visits. Spence, who had succeeded Warton's father as professor of poetry at Oxford, besought the charity of a visit in the course of his rambles;¹¹ Shenstone entertained him and Lord Donnegal at the Leasowes, and received as a souvenir of the visit a copy of the *Inscriptionum*;¹² Walpole was flattered by notice of his work, and begged the favour of a visit at Strawberry Hill with every antiquarian inducement he could offer,¹³ and a literary friendship and exchange of favours continued for

⁹Mant, *Op. cit.* p. xcix.

¹⁰d'Arblay: *Diary and Letters*, ed. 1891, I, p. 505.

¹¹See Wooll, *Op. cit.* p. 227.

¹²Shenstone's *Works*, 3 vols. Loondon, 1777, III, p. 284.

¹³Wooll, *Op. cit.* pp. 281-3.

some time. Warton's opinion and criticism were sought by many: Julius Mickle begged his approval of a play as the means of securing its acceptance by Garrick,¹⁴ who confirmed Mickle's estimate of the weight of Warton's opinion;¹⁵ Lord Lyttelton aspired to his approbation;¹⁶ and Gerard Hamilton consulted him in regard to a secretary to succeed Burke.¹⁷ In the prosecution of his literary labours, as has been mentioned, he received generous and ready aid from Garrick, Gray, Percy, Bowle, Steevens, Farmer, and many others; and the Bishop of Gloucester and Dr. Balguy were more active in behalf of his candidacy for the professorship of history than he was himself. Warton was easily among the 'lions' of Oxford. Hannah More was delighted at the prospect of dining with him and Johnson and 'whatever else is most learned and famous in this university'.¹⁸ Two Cambridge gentlemen, intending to come to Oxford to have a look at 'the Lions', wrote beseechingly to Gough for letters—'alas! we fear Tom Warton is at Winchester'.¹⁹

Many of Warton's friends were scholars and antiquarians, men to whom he was attracted by their interest in some of the literary subjects in which he delighted. Among them were Toup, the classical scholar, who helped with *Theocritus*; Bowle, the translator of *Don Quixote*; Gough, who consulted him on antiquarian matters;²⁰ Wise, the archeologist at Ellsfield and Radclivian librarian, whose valuable books and personal suggestions were always at Warton's service; Malone, whose careful scholarship made him a congenial spirit, and whom Warton assisted in the preparation of his edition of Shakespeare; and Price, the Bodleian librarian, whom he induced to remove from Jesus to Trinity College,²¹ and who became perhaps his most intimate friend. This industrious and capable but not very original man apparently enjoyed nothing more than performing little tasks of research for his friends, looking up manuscripts and books in the library, having copies of drawings made, etc. He was vastly flattered by Mr. Warton's friendship, and so grieved at his death that he could not be prevailed upon to speak of him nor to contribute to his memoirs.²²

Warton's most distinguished friend was, of course, Dr. Johnson, the great representative of the eighteenth century classicism and com-

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 379.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 380.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 322.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 299 and 305.

¹⁸*Memoirs*, 4 vols. London 1834, I, p. 262.

¹⁹*Lit. Anec.* VIII, pp. 596-7.

²⁰*Ibid.*, VI, p. 180.

²¹*Lit. Illus.* VI, p. 474.

²²*Lit. Anec.* III, p. 703.

nonsense in which, Warton shared largely. Their early friendship was rapid and close while they exchanged literary favours and plans.²³ And Dr. Johnson's tastes occasionally jumped with Warton's more revolutionary ones, as when he condemned the 'cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception',²⁴ and when he indulged a youthful fondness for old romances by choosing an old Spanish romance for his regular reading during a visit to Bishop Percy.²⁵ But however well they agreed in details, their ideals were wide apart. Between their theories of criticism and poetry there was almost the whole gulf that separates the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that separates Addison and Steele from Hazlitt, and *The Shepherd's Week* from *Michael*; and it was scarcely to be bridged by an exchange of visits and notes upon Shakespeare. Their principal interests, too, were quite different. Johnson had no taste for accurate scholarship, and having won a secure reputation with his dictionary, was disposed to yield somewhat to natural indolence, to consume much of his time in the literary conversations for which he is justly famous, and in literary work which is rather the fruit of general reading, of philosophical reflection, and of personal opinion than of exact and laborious research. Warton, on the other hand, was primarily a scholar, and although he admired Johnson as a 'lexicographer, a philosopher and an essayist',²⁶ he could not but disagree with him in important matters of taste and critical judgment, and scorn the superficiality of his scholarship. The real break in their friendship, however, probably came when Johnson touched his friend's most sensitive point by ridiculing his poetry for its laborious and useless resurrection of the obsolete.²⁷ Johnson's protest that he still loved 'the fellow dearly' for all he laughed at him, was in vain; their friendship never recovered its former warmth. Afterwards Johnson is said to have lamented 'with tears in his eyes, that the Wartons had not called upon him for the last four years' and to have declared that 'Tom Warton was the only man of genius, whom he knew, without a heart.'²⁸

There were few contemporary poets who were altogether congenial with Warton and his romantic tastes. Although his relations with Ma-

²³See supra p. 68ff.

²⁴*Life of Pope*, Johnson's *Lives*, Hill ed. III, p. 248.

²⁵Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Hill ed. I, p. 49.

²⁶Mant, *Op. cit.* I, p. xxxix.

²⁷Warton's poetry was his dearest literary offspring, and he could not bear ridicule of it. See *Lit. Ancc.* III, p. 703. For Johnson's criticism, see supra p. — and Boswell's *Johnson*, III, p. 158, note 3.

²⁸Mant, *Op. cit.* I, p. xxxix.

son were cordial enough after their first poetical passage-at-arms,²⁹ Warton never held him in much esteem, and described his facile but uninspired style as 'buckram'.³⁰ While Warton greatly admired Gray, with whom he had many tastes in common, their relations were formally, rather than warmly, friendly. In Collins, Joseph Warton's school-fellow at Winchester, the Wartons had a friend of long standing and dear, whose poetical tastes also were congenial.³¹ In Collins's poetry they recognized those poetical qualities they so much admired, which they could exalt in criticism if they could not emulate in their own verse. Thomas Warton frequently visited Collins at Chichester where they talked over literary plans,—Collins's history of the revival of learning and Warton's Spenser, and turned over the pages of old authors they both loved in Collins's valuable library, where Warton was already collecting material for his history. A few years later, when Collins's health failed completely, he was visited and tenderly cared for by Warton both at Oxford and at Chichester, after he had become too feeble for conversation and was but the wreck of the once admired friend.

On his holidays Warton indulged himself somewhat in society not altogether literary and formal, and delighted in it. He enjoyed the hospitality of quondam Oxford friends, now country parsons, who must have been delighted to welcome a college fellow of such

'discerning

Both in good liquor and good learning.'

and to share with him the best cheer that their comfortable country livings afforded. On these vacations, too, he may have had an opportunity to indulge that fondness for low society, for drinking ale in common taverns, that distressed his dignified fellow dons, who had no hankering for society less formally polite than their college intercourse offered. His geniality and friendliness on these occasions no doubt aroused an interest in his architectural researches, facilitated his access to the village church, the ruined castle or abbey of the neighborhood, brought to light any relics of antiquity that might be treasured in the village, and even disposed the vicar, parish boards, or country squires to look with more favour on his suggestions to preserve their ancient treasures from further dilapidation.

Warton's visits to Winchester, also, seem to have been attended

²⁹Warton's *Triumph of Isis* was a reply to Mason's *Isis*.

³⁰Mant, *Op. cit.* p. xxii and Boswell's *Johnson*, IV, 315.

³¹Collins and Joseph Warton published their first odes in the same year, 1746, and the latter's were more successful at the time. Collins's *Ode on Popular Superstitions* was published anonymously in 1788 with a dedication to the Wartons.

with some social pleasure. The neighborhood was regularly used for regimental camps, which both the Wartons were very fond of visiting. Military sights, the music of fife and drum had a singular charm for both of them, and martial music was always sure to set Thomas's blood a-tingling.³² Consequently Warton's letters to Price during his vacations at Winchester have often some echo of military affairs:—he has been inspecting the regiments in camp at Portsmouth and Plymouth in the course of a 'long camping tour';³³ he has dined so often with Lord Berkeley, head of the South-Gloucester, that, while he declared he had no 'presentiments' of gout, he hopes he may escape it and 'have a few gallops with the Duke of Beaufort's dogs' at his return to Oxford;³⁴ he complains of the dullness of his study at Winchester 'without drumming and fife';³⁵ or he is going to dine and drink champagne with Hans Stanley, which he fears will 'throw him out a little'.³⁶

Besides these martial delights that attended the long annual visits at Winchester, Warton enjoyed with undignified freedom the society of his brother's pupils. More than one amusing tale is told of his participation in their tasks and frolics. One one occasion, it is said, he overreached himself in preparing a lad's exercise for him, or the boy, in order to escape the flogging he was as apt to get for the poet laureate's verses as for his own, gave a wrong report of the number of 'faults' he was in the habit of making; the Doctor suspected the deception and administered punishment to the real author of the verses. Summoning the boy into his study after school, he sent also for Mr. Warton and had the exercise read for his approval. 'Don't you think it worth half a crown?' asked the Doctor. Mr. Warton assented. 'Well then, you shall give the boy one.'³⁷ On another occasion when he was joining the boys in a raid upon the buttery, the sharp-nosed Doctor descended upon them in wrath hurrying his brother with the rest to the refuge of the nearest dark corner, whence he was drawn forth in his turn by the dumbfounded Doctor.

Even at Oxford Warton seems to have indulged his fondness for low society, for public sights and spectacles, though with some little circumspection, owing to the dignity of his position. His fellow dons were sufficiently shocked when he appeared on the river enjoying his

³²Warton's journals show the same weakness for military life. In 1775 he records a visit to Gen. Oglethorpe, and in 1779 a stop 'at the Duke of Beaufort's at Jennings, two Miles from Camp.' Winchester MSS.

³³Letter to Price, quoted in Mant, *Op. cit.* p. lxxviii.

³⁴Mant, *Op. cit.* p. lxxvii.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. lxxvi.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. cv.

pipe with the water-men, and it was related by his biographer as a great scandal that he attended an execution disguised in the dress of a carter.³⁸ A story is told of him that, though probably not quite true, at least indicates that a taste for unconventional amusements was generally ascribed to him. He once could not be found when he should have been preparing a Latin speech for a public occasion, and his friends, knowing that he never could resist following martial music, hit upon the scheme of calling him forth by sending along the streets of Oxford a drum and fife. Before long the professor issued from a favourite tavern 'with cutty pipe in mouth, greasy gown, and dirty band, and began strutting after the martial music, to the tune of "Give the King his own again".'³⁹ A similar taste is indicated by Daniel Prince's fragmentary account of the Jelly-bag Society; the meeting-place was announced by the irresistible beating of a drum, and Warton was sure to attend 'with his jelly-bag cap on.'⁴⁰ But although the society existed for eight or ten years, no letter-writing gossip has seen fit to tell more of its meetings, who its members were, nor the object and nature of the society. These anecdotes of personal eccentricities—whether true or false—are just what we should expect of the author of the *Companion to the Guide*, and editor—and chief contributor—to the *Oxford Sausage*, and they make the author of the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* and the *History of English Poetry* more likable and human.

But such amusements cannot have wasted much time in so busy and productive a life as Warton's. The stocky, red-cheeked Oxford don gave a life-time of 'academic leisure' to scholarly pursuits. The intervals of lectures and pupils, of pastoral duties and college exercises, Warton devoted to his private work, writing and reading in his own study at Trinity or in the congenial Gothic atmosphere of Duke Humphrey's Ward overlooking Exeter Gardens. His days, though busy, must have been somewhat monotonous; yet in their well-ordered monotony grew slowly and steadily his contributions to the knowledge of his day and ours. It was his custom, said Huntingford, who knew him well both at Oxford and at Winchester, to rise moderately early;⁴¹ this enabled him to do a half day's work before the sleepy college awoke to life, and give him leisure to stroll about and chat with his friends with every appearance of indolence and ease. He regularly spent some time each day in his favourite walks along the Cherwell in meditation

³⁸*Ibid.* p. ciii.

³⁹Hartley Coleridge: *Lives of Northern Worthies*, 3 vols. London, 1852, II, p. 264.

⁴⁰*Lit. Anec.* III, p. 702.

⁴¹Mant, *Op. cit.* p. xcvi.

and in enjoyment of the lovely scene. 'Under the mask of indolence', says the *Biographical Dictionary*, 'no man was more busy: his mind was ever on the wing in search of some literary prey.'⁴²

Warton's success in producing critical and historical work greatly in advance of his age is thus partly accounted for by his persistent and intelligent devotion to his work and the constant enthusiasm which inspired and guided its operations. If, as Johnson said, Thomson saw everything in a poetical light through the medium of his favourite pursuit, so Warton saw all things in the light of his enthusiasm for the past; he subjected all things to a careful scrutiny to determine their relation to his consuming interest in antiquities chiefly literary. He seems to have been impressed very early by the enormous field open to the research of the scholar, and though at times confused by the very multiplicity of matter and unable to distinguish unerringly the gold from the dross, he never abandoned this pursuit nor abated his interest. Modern scholars, whose original research is now necessarily somewhat limited in extent because Warton and his successors canvassed the large field so widely, have frequently spoken with scorn and condescension of Warton's superficiality and inaccuracy in his treatment of a field too large for any one man; but let them conceive, if they will, the ever-growing delight and fascination of advancing into the almost unexplored wilderness of English literature from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries, with no restrictions and no limitations save those of time and strength and the accessibility of material—rare black-letter texts, first editions, and unedited, even unread, manuscripts; in this scholars' paradise—and, it must be added, with no guide, and in the face of eighteenth century prejudice and disapproval—what modern scholar could have produced anything more valuable than the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* and the *History of English Poetry*; and how many would be (and are) proud to have done much less!

The vigorous personality of this eighteenth century poet-scholar is not without a strong appeal to the modern imagination. One seems at times to catch glimpses of him about his favourite haunts. In his study at Trinity he sits before a plain oak desk piled with rare and curious old folios—the dusty tomes he loved to peruse—and littered with many little notebooks of heavy rough paper in gay marbled pasteboard covers. There is a bottle of port and a glass upon the mantel-piece, and upon a small table, whereon too are many books, the tea-things that the bed-maker has not yet removed. The room is untidily strewn with coats and caps, riding-boots and spurs, old coins, keys, and pipes, and everywhere

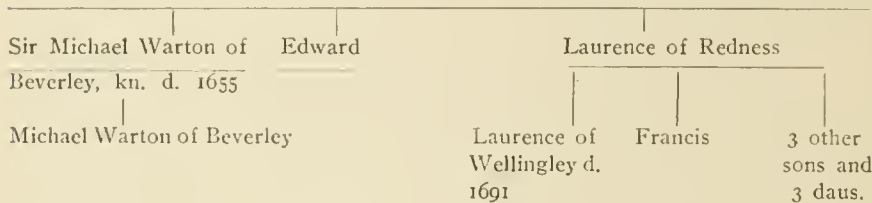
⁴²*Ibid.*, p. xcix.

more and more books. The scholar himself is not quite clearly discernible through the blue haze of tobacco smoke; but he has a heavy awkward figure and looks as untidy as his surroundings in his shiny, wrinkled jacket, his rumpled neck-cloth, and his wig too much over one ear. When the eager dreamer would peer into the thoughtful eyes, the figure vanishes and, still pursued in fancy, reappears, a solitary traveler jogging along the tortuous windings of the River Wye upon a steady roadster as sturdy as himself. Alternately enjoying the Welsh scene and losing himself in meditation, the rider turns from the river road and winds his way along the hillside to the castle ruins that crown it. Here he stops to admire the fine view of wooded cliffs and peaceful valley before he crosses the half-filled moat and passes under the rusty old port-cullis to survey the Norman tower rising stoutly strong above the scanty ruins of the later castle which surrounds it. And here we leave him at the close of day trying to decipher an almost obliterated inscription upon the chapel wall—oblivious of the flight of time in his devotion to his own dream of a vanished past.

APPENDIX A.

The possible connection of Thomas Warton with the Wartons of Beverley is shown by an excerpt from the Wharton MSS. in the Bodleian Library, 14 f. 12 b. There is no direct proof that the Francis Warton who was born at Redness is the Francis Warton of Breamore who was Thomas Warton's great grandfather.

Michael Warton of Beverley Park



Francis Warton Breamore, Hants.

|

Anthony Warton of Godalming, Surrey, 1650-1715

|

Thomas Warton of Basingstoke, Hants. 1690-1745

— Elizabeth, 2d dau. of John Richardson, of Dunsfield, Surrey.

Joseph	Jane	Thomas

See Joseph Foster: *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500-1714*, vol. IV, 1577.

APPENDIX B.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE PRINTED SOURCES OF WARTON'S

History of English Poetry.

In compiling this list of references from the *History*, and especially from the foot-notes, I have tried to select only those from which historical information is taken. I have omitted mention of works either discussed or cited by way of illustration or comparison; to include these would have nearly doubled the length of the list. I have omitted also the very large number of manuscript sources.

Titles are usually given by Warton in a greatly abbreviated form. I have completed them by diligent search and the examination of many books, carefully comparing hundreds of Warton's references with the originals. When Warton gives no dates and when he probably had access to several editions, I have usually been able to discover the one he used by looking up his references in the various editions. Letters after the titles in my list are used with the following significance:

- a. Warton's references correspond with this edition.
- b. Only edition before Warton's history.
- c. Warton's references are not to page; edition cannot be determined.
- d. Warton's references cannot be found in this edition.
- e. Warton's references do not correspond to any edition in the British Museum or Bodleian Library.
- f. This edition is not to be found in either the British Museum or Bodleian Library.

No letter is used when Warton's date for an edition is correct, and also in a few instances when I have not verified his references in the edition or editions given in my list.

The references to Warton's *History* are to the first edition of volumes two and three, to the second edition of volume one. Since the pages of dissertations I and II are not numbered in that edition, I have made the pagination consecutive through both dissertations, including the numbers in parentheses.

My method of completing Warton's titles may be illustrated by the following titles in which I have preserved the original citation in bold face type:

Eccardus, Johannes Georgius: Corpus Historicum Medii Ævi . . . 2 voll. Lips.
1723, fol.

II:20.

Edmonds, Alexander: The Trew Report of the Dysputacyon had, and begone
in the Conuocacyo Hours at London, **London, 1583.** f

III:355.

- Eginhart; *Vita et Gesta Caroli magni*, 1565. f
ibid. accesscrunt . . Veltonis Goldasti Animadversiones. . . 1711.
 I: (54, 58, 91, 98, 101, 102, 108).
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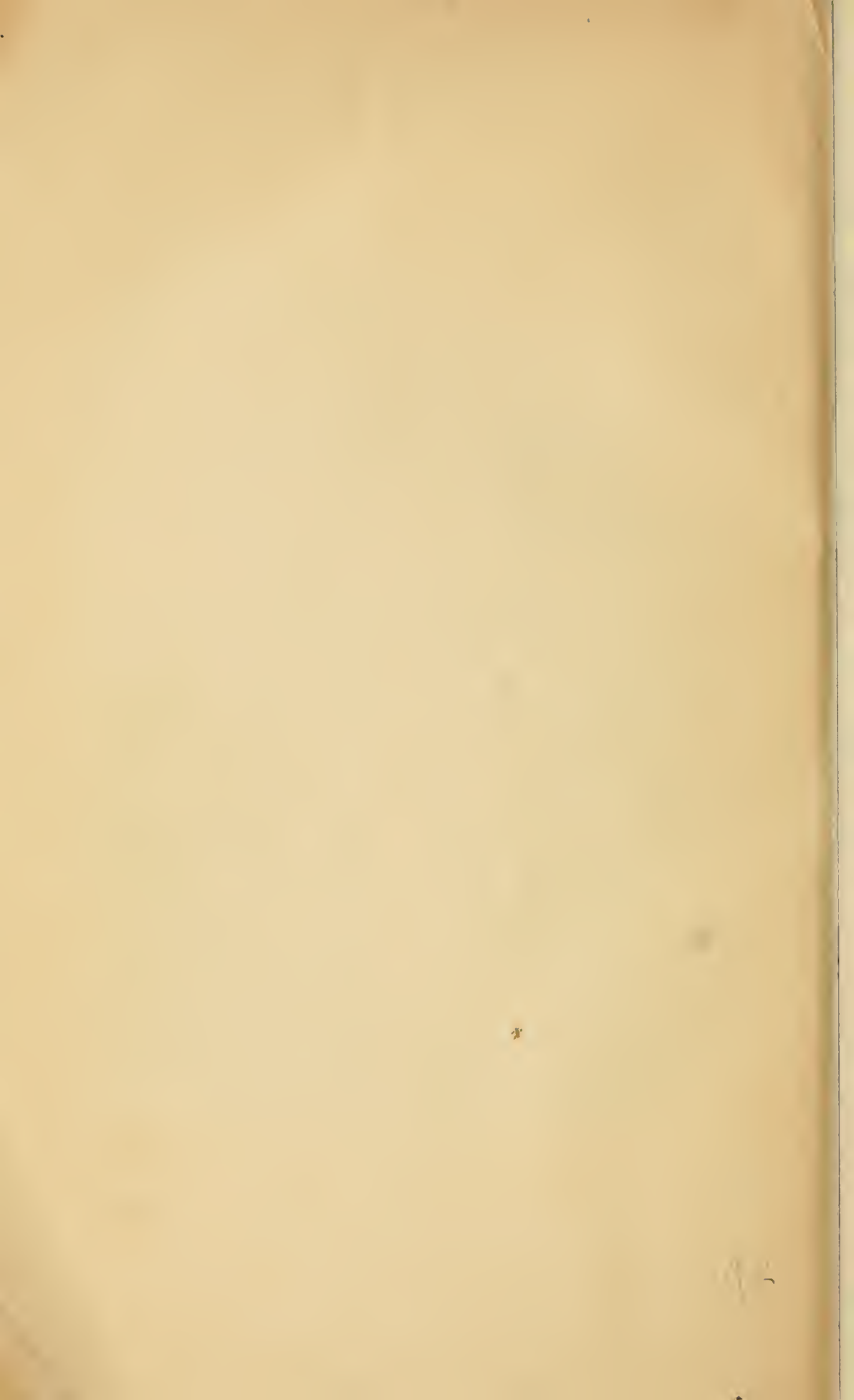
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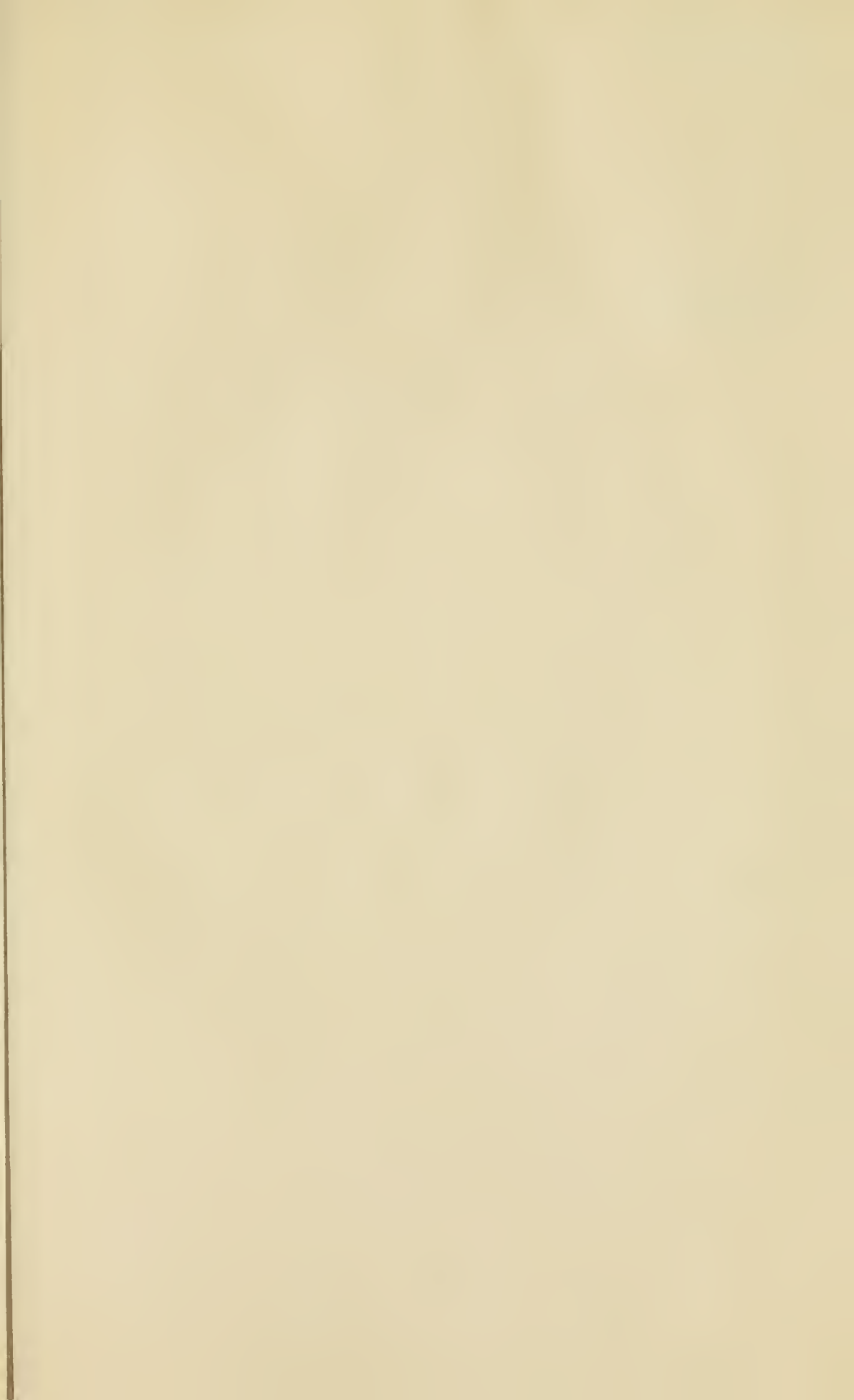
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